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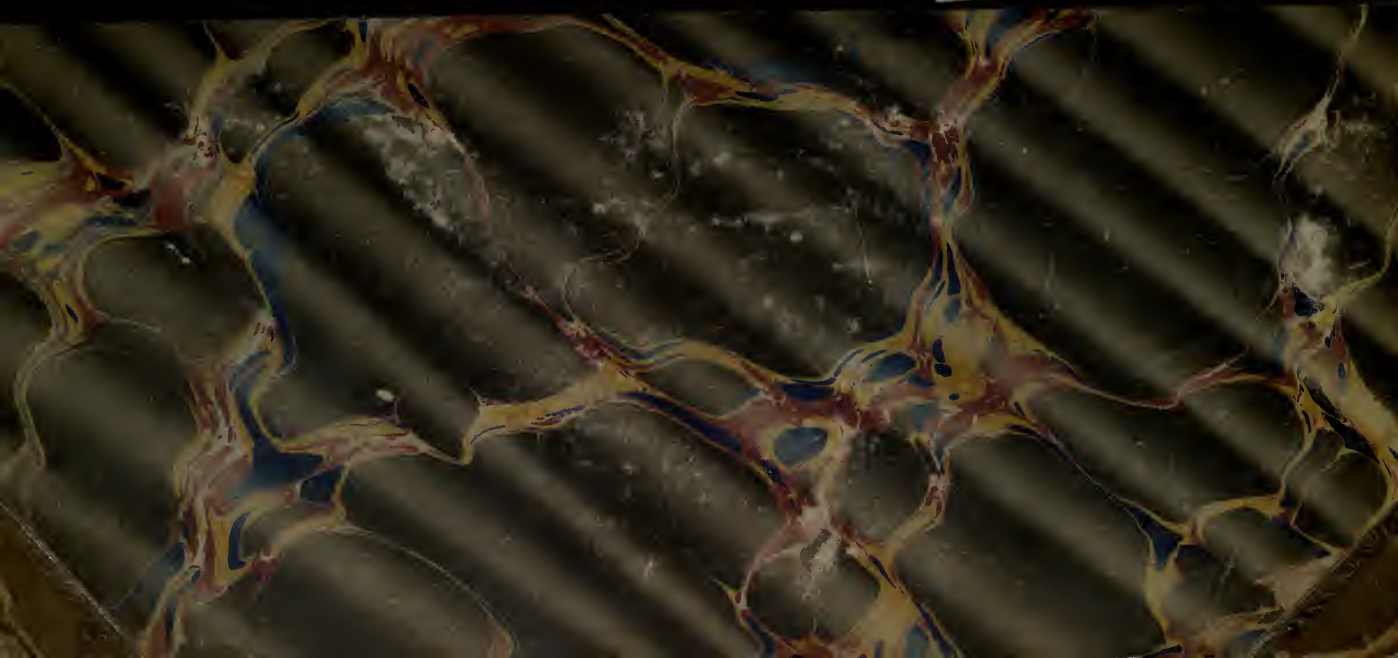

THE

CHELSEA PENSIONERS.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "THE SUBALTERN."

He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named!
Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he 'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day.—KING HENRY V.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1829.

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A DAY

ON

THE NEUTRAL GROUND.

(CONTINUED.)

A DAY

ON THE NEUTRAL GROUND.

CHAPTER VII.

WHILST Davis was thus exerting himself with an energy and discretion beyond his years, both Mr. Morgan and Harry Beckwith remained close prisoners at Belmont, in a plight as little enviable as it often falls to the lot of innocent persons to experience. From the manner of their judges, neither the one nor the other entertained a very sanguine expectation, that the sentence would be one of absolute acquittal; yet with the weakness, if so it deserve to be termed, which distinguishes all our reasonings with respect to ourselves, they would

not for a moment believe that their execution had been determined on. Of any act in the most remote degree allied to treason, their consciences fully acquitted them; nay, how was it possible that treasonable or under-hand dealings should have been carried on between men, neither of whom enjoyed the most distant opportunity of acting treacherously, had he been ever so much disposed? It was true, that a miserable slave had accused them of such proceedings; and that the Court appeared willing to credit his assertions in preference to their explanation. Yet was it difficult to believe, that five persons possessed of ordinary discernment, would not, when left to themselves, see on which side the truth lay; whilst it was a libel upon the profession of arms to suppose that officers would be guided, especially in a case like the present, otherwise than by a conviction of the truth. On these grounds, they came to the natural conclusion, that though their personal liberty might for a time be curtailed, they ran no hazard whatever of dying an ignominious death; and hence, that the best

course for them to pursue was to submit with a good grace to a fate which there appeared no possibility of eluding, or ameliorating.

In this agreeable delusion,—I use the word relatively, not arbitrarily,—they were not, however, permitted long to continue. The business of the trial was scarcely concluded, and the troops were yet in the act of assembling for their march, when Captain Jonathan Dobson made his appearance in the parlour, whither they had been reconducted; and sitting down with perfect coolness at the table, still covered with glasses and decanters, applied himself once more to an occupation in which he appeared to take peculiar delight.

"I drink to our better acquaintance, gentlemen!" said he, pouring out a glass of wine, and raising it to his lips; "and it strikes me that there is no time to be lost in forming it. You know that you are both to be hanged tomorrow morning at sunrise."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the prisoners in a breath: "it cannot be that on such evidence as was adduced against us, any Court, however

prejudiced, would sentence a fellow-creature to death. You jest, Captain Dobson; the thing is totally incredible."

"It will be no jesting matter by and by, however," observed the ruffian with a leer of peculiar malignancy. "When your limbs are dangling like scarecrows from the branches of a couple of trees, I guess you will find the thing a very serious, if not a very agreeable reality. However, a man can only die once, you know; and as I am left here to see that you die as you ought, my first recommendation is, that you put your worldly affairs in order. In plain language, Mr. Morgan, I have to request that you make over to me without delay, all the money, plate, and other portable valuables, which happen to be within reach; that they may be applied, as the goods and chattels of traitors ought to be applied—to the service of the State and its officers."

"Captain Dobson!" replied the individual to whom he spoke, "even now I am unable to believe that you mean what you say. If you threaten us with death for the purpose of exacting from me money or plate, rest assured

that no such threat is necessary. My keys are in the writing-desk on that table; you are at liberty to open every drawer in the house, and to take from it what you will. All that I request in return is, that you will loosen these cords a little: they cut my wrists dreadfully, and are not needed as a matter of security."

"As for that," replied the Skinner, "there can be no great harm in indulging you. Corporal Pike, untie the prisoners;—and look ye, order in lights; and place chairs for the gentlemen beside myself. Send one of your people to the cellar likewise, and fetch up more wine—it were pity not to make their last evening a jolly one."

The Captain's orders were obeyed. The cords were removed both from Mr. Morgan and Beckwith; and candles being placed upon the table, a fresh supply of Madeira was produced; but with the Skinner's repeated invitation to fall to, his guests, as he facetiously termed them, refused to comply.

"Now it strikes me," observed the ruffian coolly, pouring out at the same time a large goblet of wine, which he drank off at a draught,

" that you stand grievously in your own light just at present. A short life and a merry, has been my doctrine throughout; and seeing your lives are likely to be short enough, in the devil's name, why not make them merry to the last?"

" Wretch!" exclaimed Beckwith, unable any longer to suppress his indignation, " for man I cannot call you: is it possible that what you say is true, and that you can still jest with the miseries of dying men?"

" Well rated! boy," shouted the Skinner; " spoken like any twaddler, or old woman of three-score. Jest! why what the devil would you have me do?—sing psalms, or say prayers? Jonathan Dobson has no great skill in such matters; he has been a merry blade all his days, and has made many a poor devil laugh as near the gallows as you are; and when it comes to his own turn, he means to laugh there too. However, I have no wish to press my company upon you, if it be unpleasant. Mr. Morgan, I avail myself of your very liberal and gentlemanlike offer," taking the keys at the

same time from the place where they lay, "for which I shall not fail to erect a stone to your memory; for as to your own destiny, that, you may rely upon it, is irremediable. You die to-morrow morning as soon as the sun rises; so I commend you to your own meditations, whilst I proceed to place the legitimate seal upon your effects."

"For heaven's sake!" exclaimed Mr. Morgan, as the Skinner made a movement to withdraw, "if the case be really so, grant me one request. My daughter, my beloved Cecily, and my son,—let me see and embrace them once more before I die!"

"Your son! ten thousand devils seize the scorpion! where is he?" exclaimed the Skinner, starting up as he spoke. "What ho! there. Let every hole and corner in the house be searched for that young viper, whose will to sting was shown fairly enough, though his ability, thank God, did not answer to it. How, in the name of every thing damnable, came I to forget that such a monster existed? But no matter, he cannot be far off; and I will take it

upon me, in return for his kind intentions towards myself, to make him your companion both to-day and to-morrow."

"But my daughter, my Cecily!" shrieked the old man.

"Curse your daughter!" replied the Skinner, as he twirled the bunch of keys in his hand, and quitted the room.

What the feelings of the unhappy father were at this moment, I leave you to judge. Not gifted by Nature with a mind particularly vigorous, and hardly as yet recovered from the debilitating effect of a heavy domestic calamity, Mr. Morgan sunk into a state of despondency so pitiable, as in a great measure to draw away his companion's thoughts from his own not very enviable condition.

"My children! my children!" exclaimed he, clasping his now loosened hands together, "what will become of them, left in this cold world without a protector, without a friend on whom to rely for assistance or advice! And this must be Cecily's fate,—the fate of her whom I have reared with so much tenderness,—who bears the very impress of her sainted mother

stamped both upon her form and on her heart! And Davis, too, did he not speak of making him my companion both now and to-morrow morning? will the barbarian murder young as well as old, the child with the parent? Oh! Mr. Beckwith, what have you done? how have you brought ruin upon a family, that never did you wrong,—never wished you otherwise than happy!"

Beckwith was deeply affected by the energy of his friend's despair; and the more so, as he could not but feel that, of the sad scene before him, he was the cause, though the innocent one. He would have spoken comfort to the unhappy father, had he known where to look for it; but the words died on his lips, and he could utter only a groan expressive of bitter anguish. He turned round, however, to the troopers, who, three in number, still remained in the room, and in a firm, but not a harsh voice, requested that they would leave them to themselves.

"You can just as effectually provide for our security," continued he, "by watching at the door and outside the window; and I am sure you will not refuse to men in our situa-

tion, the privilege of conversing together unrestrained by the presence of strangers."

The American soldiers, less inhuman than their leader, exhibited evident signs of commiseration as Beckwith addressed them. The Corporal, in particular, seemed greatly moved by the contemplation of Mr. Morgan's grief, and in a tone of marked feeling expressed his readiness to do any thing that would at all contribute to their comfort. "I fear, however," continued he, "that to obey your wishes in this particular is beyond my power, seeing that I have received no instructions to that effect from Captain Dobson; and the Captain is not one lightly to overlook an offence committed by those under him. But my comrades will relieve you of their presence; and for me, you may depend upon it that I will not watch your movements, at least with an eye of idle curiosity." So saying, the honest fellow ordered his companions to withdraw, whilst he himself retired into a distant corner and sat down. "God bless you, friend!" exclaimed Mr. Morgan; "you, at least, seem to have the heart of a man,—you must be a parent, otherwise you could not speak and act as you do."

Mr. Morgan was interrupted here by a sound as of persons struggling outside the door. The noise was not indeed that of a tumult, as when men are opposed to men in close and desperate strife, but rather such as arises from an effort on the part of some individual to make way through a crowd which would obstruct his passage. This lasted for a moment only, and then came the sound of a voice, which, if heard only once, could never again be forgotten. "Let me pass, let me pass, if ye be men!" shrieked Cecily, wildly; "I must and I will see my father!"

"My child, my child!" exclaimed the old man, running franticly to the door;—but before he could reach it the Corporal was at his side. "Stand back, for God's sake, Sir!" cried the honest fellow. "It is not that I do not feel for you,—but, were you seen there by other eyes besides mine, the consequences might be serious. I will introduce your daughter."

So saying, he undid the latch, and in the next moment Cecily was in the arms of her father. "My father, my beloved father!" exclaimed she, clinging wildly round his neck, "why is this? Why would they have kept me

from you? And you too, Harry? surely, surely they have told me falsehoods. You are not prisoners,—you are not condemned to die,—you have done nothing to deserve death,—oh, nothing, nothing,—they cannot dip their hands in the blood of the innocent!"

"Bless thee, my Cecily!" exclaimed the wretched old man, "a father's last and holiest blessing rest upon thy head! They have told you but the truth, though indeed it was cruel to do so; our hours are numbered, and to-morrow you will be an orphan!"

A cry, piercing, shrill, and terrible, burst from the lips of the agitated girl. She did not faint; for her bosom continued to heave, and her eyes, opened to their fullest stretch, turned alternately from her lover to her father, and from her father to her lover;—but it seemed as if this confirmation of a rumour too horrible to have been hitherto credited, had driven reason at once and for ever from her throne. She gasped wildly for breath, which came for a time in sobs, and with great apparent difficulty; and then tearing herself suddenly from her father's arms, burst into a loud hysteric laugh. "An orphan, I am an orphan!" shrieked she,

"and you dead, and Harry dead, and my mother, and Davis,—all, all in one grave! Oh, no! no! you mistake! it is a dream, it is all a dream, a wild baseless dream, such as comes upon us when we are in a fever during a night like this. Hark!" continued she, turning her ear hastily towards the window, "did I not tell you there would be a storm to-night? There it comes. The wind rises, and that, that is a peal of thunder—I know it, I know it, for it never thunders without causing my brain to burn, and then I have fearful dreams."

Though spoken under a paroxysm of strong delirium, poor Cecily was not at present altogether deceived by the workings of her own disordered fancy. The storm, of which notice has already been taken, was begun, and the wind swept in tremendous gusts through the woods adjoining. A crash rather than a peal of thunder, too, burst even as she had described it, and the rain came down as from a waterspout, hissing and splashing with the violence of a cataract. All present were struck with the extraordinary coincidence; for of the gathering together of the clouds they had been too busy to take notice, and when the strange drama began,

which appeared now to be drawing to its close, the heavens were clear, and the air mild and serene. But the sensation of surprise, and the abstraction consequent upon it, lasted only for a moment. Mr. Morgan and Harry Beckwith were too deeply interested in the scene before them, to permit any matter not immediately connected with it, to occupy their thoughts. They saw only the melancholy condition of Cecily, in which every consideration of their own fate was swallowed up. "Cecily, my own Cecily!" exclaimed the youth, taking one of her hands, whilst Mr. Morgan affectionately held the other, "why thus distress yourself? why look so wild and haggard?—Compose yourself, love; your father spoke but at random, and things are not so desperate as he represented them. Do you not know me, Cecily?" continued he, observing that her eye was bent upon his, but with a vacant and unmeaning stare.

"Know you! yes!" replied Cecily. "I know you are Oliver Beckwith, and you would alienate your cousin's affections from me if you could. But there I defy you. Harry has sworn to be faithful, and not all your arts will induce

him to break his vow. But did they not say that he was dead?—and my father too! that he died? Poor old man, they might have spared him, I think, even if they murdered Harry."

"Oh, God! what have I done?" cried Mr. Morgan, striking his forehead violently with one of his hands. "My child, my poor child is a maniac, and I, miserable that I am, am the cause."

Mr. Morgan burst into tears,—a movement which did not escape the notice of his daughter. She turned kindly towards him, and said in a low sweet voice, "You weep, old man,—why do you weep?—are you unhappy? No! no! you must not be unhappy. All is well now; my father is in Heaven, and Harry is in Heaven; and in Heaven, you know, our happiness is perfect. Dry up your tears, we shall go to them there in good time." As she uttered these words, she drew forth a handkerchief, and made as if she would herself have done that kind office for him; but he averted his face, and wept the more bitterly.

"How is this?" asked she, turning to Beckwith: "he is very miserable, yet you, like

myself, cannot weep with him. Oh! my poor eyeballs, how they burn, burn, burn!" As she spoke, she passed her small white hand over her eyes, and then gazed at it attentively. "There is no moisture there," said she; "yet he weeps."

"Cecily! Cecily! my beloved, look not thus; turn your eyes upon me. Do you not recognize your own Harry? It is myself,—I am not dead, dearest,—I live, and shall live to call you mine; these are mere wanderings of your own imagination. And that is your father: he weeps only because you do not know him. Call him father, and his tears will cease at once."

At this moment the door of the parlour was thrown violently open, and Captain Dobson rushed in.

"Thou old knave!" said he, addressing himself to Mr. Morgan, whilst his cheek burned and his eyes flashed with rage, "Where is thy cockatrice of a son? Tell me how I am to find him; otherwise, by all the powers of hell, even now I will try the broiling plan, and save your weasand from being stretched by roasting you alive."

"I know nothing of the youth," answered Mr. Morgan, drying up his tears. "If he have escaped, I thank God for it; but I could not, if I would, direct you where to search for him."

"It is false, dotard," replied the Skinner fiercely. "You know that that picture does not cover the only lurking-place in this den of treachery; and you ought to know by this time, that if you attempt to deceive me farther, you shall not escape my vengeance. Produce the imp, I say, or—Holla! what have we here?" continued he, observing for the first time the form of Cecily,—"that little minx at large! And you, Corporal Pike, what are you about in the corner? Blubbering like a turnip-headed driveller as you are!—broken-hearted, I guess, to witness so much family suffering! By heavens! it is enough to drive a man mad. Call in your people instantly, and see that the girl be carried back to the place from whence she came; and mind me, no more of this chicken-heartedness—it is a thing I cannot endure."

"You have never found me chicken-hearted in danger, Captain," answered the Corpo-

ral, moving towards the door; "and if I do feel for these persons, I guess there is no great harm in it."

"Silence, scoundrel!" exclaimed Dobson; "say but another word and I will cleave you to the chine. Here, men," continued he, addressing himself to the two soldiers who had by this time entered. "Bear this woman hence, and see that she be on no account permitted to quit the apartment again. I thought my orders on that head had been sufficiently explicit already."

The men obeyed, and as the poor girl walked unresistingly away, in melancholy ignorance both of her conductors and those whom she left behind, neither Mr. Morgan nor Harry Beckwith made any attempt to hinder her removal. To have pursued a different line of conduct, indeed, would have been to subject themselves and her to personal insult for no purpose. But it was well that the respectful manner of the troopers took away even the desire to oppose them; for it is not always practicable, when feeling is strongly excited, to listen to the voice of Reason, however plainly she may speak. Ne-

vertheless, the satisfaction which they experienced from observing that, though removed, she was removed gently, was soon forgotten amid other and less agreeable occurrences. Captain Dobson waited only till the door closed, when he again returned to the question of Davis's absence.

"I am in no humour for trifling," said he sternly. "I ask again, and once for all, will you, of your own accord, give the information I seek? or must I force it from you."

"I have no information to give," said Mr. Morgan timidly. "I know nothing more of the lad than yourself. I beseech you, do not torment me for no purpose."

"How can the case be otherwise?" asked Beckwith. "The young man fled, as you might have seen, without holding any communication with his father."

"Silence! Sir," cried the Skinner imperiously. "Nobody has requested your opinion, and it will be time enough to give it when it is asked. But as to you, traitor," and he again addressed himself to Mr. Morgan, "I warn you that farther equivocation will avail

you nothing. Tell me where to find your son, or roast you shall, before you be ten minutes older."

"I cannot, indeed I cannot," replied Mr. Morgan in a voice weak with terror. "I am in your power, and you may do with me what you will; but were you to tear the flesh from my bones with red-hot pincers, I could not satisfy you on a matter of which I myself know nothing."

"Very well!" replied the Skinner coolly, and walked away.

For an instant or two after he quitted them, the prisoners were disposed to hope, that he did not seriously intend to carry into execution the threat to which he had given utterance. It is true that neither of them were ignorant of the horrid barbarities which the class of persons to which Captain Jonathan Dobson belonged, were in the habit of committing. Robbers rather than soldiers by profession, the Skinners on the one side, like the Cow-boys on the other, were a disgrace as well as a nuisance to the powers that employed them; their cruelty being equalled only by their rapacity, as that, again, had no

parallel anywhere. It is true that during the latter years of the war, strenuous exertions were made, more especially on the side of the Republicans, to suppress them; and not a few bands which had drawn together for plunder only, were compelled to act as soldiers under fixed leaders. Of this number Jonathan Dobson's troop was one; and Jonathan himself, from a chief of lawless banditti, was metamorphosed into a Captain of irregular cavalry. But habits acquired during seven years of uncontrolled licentiousness, were not to be overcome in a moment; and even now the Captain of cavalry was as reckless of the sufferings of his fellow creatures as had been the Skinner Chief. This was not the first occasion upon which Jonathan Dobson had applied fire to wring from his captives such information as he wanted. Not that the circumstances of the case were exactly similar, inasmuch as hitherto the torture had been used to compel a surrender of money supposed to be concealed, and at such concealment Mr. Morgan had made no attempt. But the man who was capable of roasting a human being, in order to obtain possession of a few worthless

dollars, was not very likely to shrink from the same experiment when the indulgence of a strong feeling of anger was at issue. Such were the ideas which passed in dreadful array through the mind of Mr. Morgan, during his tormentor's absence; and the event speedily proved that they had not been conjured up by terror absolutely groundless.

In the mean while the storm continued to rage with unabated fury; and so tremendous was the uproar which it occasioned, that all lesser noises were lost in its tumult. Once, indeed, and once only, there came upon the ears of Beckwith and Mr. Morgan, the sound as of wood newly kindled,—a sort of crackling such as boards, when set fire to, produce,—which caused the very flesh, at least of the latter, to creep. Presently the door was again opened, and the strong light which came in from the hall, showed that the sense of hearing had not deceived them.

"Now then," cried the Skinner, "the fire is ready, and once more I ask you, whether you will direct me where to find your son."

"You ask in vain, indeed you do," shrieked

Mr. Morgan; "I cannot tell, as I desire to be saved, whither he is gone. If you have searched the premises through, you have done all that I could direct you to do; for indeed, indeed, there is no secret closet except this. For the love of Heaven, as you hope for mercy yourselves, do not torture me," exclaimed the unhappy man wildly, as four or five ruffians advanced towards him; "you cannot force from me that which I have not to communicate: did I know where he is, though it were his life you sought, I would speak out."

But Mr. Morgan's supplications were addressed to beings perfectly callous to such appeals. Without a moment's pause, they pressed upon him, and were already stretching forth their hands to seize him, when, not Beckwith only, but Corporal Pike himself interfered.

"Captain Dobson," cried the latter, "I have witnessed more of these matters than my conscience exactly approves; and, by heavens! I will not stand idly by to witness another. These gentlemen are condemned by lawful

authority to die; but I know no right that you or any other man has to inflict upon them a sentence heavier than the laws have awarded. Stand back, I say; the first that lays finger upon my prisoner dies."

The brave fellow levelled his carabine as he spoke, and the troopers being totally without arms, instantly retreated.

Not so the Captain. Calling aloud for the rest of the troop to come to his assistance, he drew his sabre, and sprang towards the Corporal, who, without firing, kept the muzzle of his piece steadily pointed towards his opponent; but before either the leader's call could be obeyed, or a blow struck, or trigger pulled, other and no less unlooked for events occurred. The voice of the sentinel who stood at the front door, was suddenly heard over the roar of the tempest. He challenged loudly, but his challenge was unanswered; and before it could be repeated, the report of a musket rang through the house. "To arms, to arms! the enemy are upon us!" was echoed in all quarters. Instantly there was a hubbub in the hall. Carabines, pistols, and muskets, were discharged; and the door being burst open,

six of the Skinners rushed furiously in, followed by twice as many men in British uniforms. "Forward, forward!" shouted a voice which Harry instantly recognized as that of his cousin. Instantly, a clashing of steel, mixed with a confused rattle of fire-arms, ensued; but the contest, though fierce and desperate, was of short duration. The brave and good Corporal, pierced by three balls, fell dead; Captain Dobson was pinned to the earth by as many bayonets, and the remainder of the Skinners, throwing down their weapons, entreated for quarter. Then it was, and not till then, that Oliver Beckwith threw himself into the arms of his cousin, whilst Mr. Morgan, clasped in the embrace of his brave and enterprising son, received an assurance, which he could not distrust, of his safety. But there was no time to be lost in idle protestations of mutual affection. Several of the enemy flying on the first alarm, had effected their escape, in spite of every effort to prevent it; and there could not be a doubt, that should the report of the present expedition reach Peekskill before its retreat was rendered secure, immediate measures would be taken to cut off the party en-

gaged in it. Oliver accordingly urged his friends to mount and fly without a moment's delay; and as he found them by no means indisposed to obey his suggestions, Cecily was promptly removed from her apartment, and placed before her brother upon one of the Skinners' fleetest chargers. The soldiers, of whom not one had fallen, were gathered together; and in ten minutes from their arrival at the point to be assailed, the whole troop was in full flight towards Kingsbridge.

They had not, however, gained the bottom of the valley—they were not, indeed, advanced much above half way between Belmont and the high road, when a spectacle attracted their notice, upon which few could look, even in their circumstances, without horror. The elegant villa, where, of late, such trying scenes had been acted, was one sheet of flame. In arranging his furnace on the flagged pavement of the hall, Captain Jonathan Dobson had not been very particular in avoiding the wood-work, and the progress which the flames made from faggot to faggot till they gained the skirting, was not observed in the turmoil which ensued. The

consequence was, that in five minutes after the house was abandoned, it caught fire. Being constructed entirely of timber, the flames spread from room to room with inconceivable rapidity; and now asserted their empire over every part of a building, in no quarter capable of opposing them. I need not say, that the strong light cast by the blazing mansion over the woods and green hills far and near, produced no common effect, combating, as the flames appeared to do, against the torrents of rain which fell upon them. But this was not the only, nor the most memorable feature in the night-view. There appeared all at once, in the midst of the fire, the figure of a man, vainly struggling, as it seemed, to make his way into the open air; and, brief as the opportunity afforded of watching him was, he was instantly recognized as the Skinner. But his effort to escape from the devouring element was vain. Enfeebled by his wounds, he seemed scarcely capable of raising one limb after the other; and he had just placed a hand upon the outer ledge of a window-sill, when the substance on which he stood suddenly gave way, and he fell back into the flames. He

was seen no more; and his shrieks, if he uttered any, were unheard amidst the roar of the flames, and the bellowing of the storm.

My story is told; for what remains to be narrated, a few words will suffice to express. You have doubtless anticipated that Oliver Beckwith was no sooner made aware of the perilous situation of his friends, than he applied to his commanding officer and obtained permission to attempt their rescue. For this purpose a body of forty chosen men, each well mounted and fully armed, was assigned to him, at the head of which, with Davis as his guide, he lost no time in setting out. Taking a circuitous and unfrequented road, they did not reach Belmont till long past midnight,—nor till their arrival, if delayed a few minutes longer, might have been too late. Once there, however, and every thing else went on as could have been wished. With great skill and extreme caution Oliver surrounded the house, making his people advance in a circle, which closed in as it drew towards a centre; and assisted by the heavy rain, and the wind, which still blew in gusts, he him-

self, with a dozen of his trustiest followers, gained the door before they were observed. Of what followed you have already been sufficiently informed. Before the American vidette could repeat his challenge, he was shot dead at his post; and the party bursting in, overpowered in a few minutes all the resistance, which men taken, as the enemy were, by surprise, ventured to offer. Nor was the retreat less skilfully or less successfully conducted than the advance. Without the occurrence of a single casualty, the whole party gained the lines; and great and general was the rejoicing, among all ranks, when their return was announced.

With respect to Cecily, the shock which her nerves had undergone, produced, as it was to be supposed that it would, a violent fever, which confined her for several weeks to bed, and placed life itself in imminent hazard; but youth, and a constitution naturally good, triumphed over the malady, and she recovered, to be, what she had ever been, the admiration of all that knew her. I need not add, that her marriage with Harry Beckwith followed soon after.

The latter, receiving from his father-in-law a much larger fortune than he had any right to expect, served on till the conclusion of the war, when he quitted the army; and is now, I believe, one of the leading men in the state, where he incurred so many dangers, and won so fair a bride.

THE conclusion of the above tale drew forth, as the conclusion of its predecessor had done, a torrent of thanks and applause. This was followed by a bumper to the health of the President; after which the party broke up, and we retired each to his own apartment.

It is not necessary to waste the reader's time, by entering into any minute detail of the mode in which the earlier part of the following day was spent. Enough is done when I inform him, that the hint which I deemed it expedient to drop touching my own departure, was met with a general burst of condemnation, and that it was pronounced absolutely inconsistent with the standing rules of the place, to permit a brother soldier to give up his quarters in the Hospital, after only a few hours' occupation. The time might come, it was insinuated, when I should consider it advisable to offer myself as a candidate for admission; and having it in my power to

obtain a tolerably perfect insight into the system according to which affairs were managed, I should act very imprudently, did I scruple to avail myself of it. In a word, no reasoning of mine, having reference to the prosecution of my journey, would be listened to. One day more, they insisted upon my spending among them ; and as the preceding had certainly been the reverse of a dull day, it required no very vehement exertion on their part to overcome my scruples.

Having thus consented to continue his guest during four and twenty hours longer, I readily gave myself up, in every other respect, to the guidance of Major Cohorn ; and I found that he was no less efficient as a director of the business of the morning, than he was able as the president of a mess-table. We fished the stream together ; and the great success which attended our efforts, is attributable, I must confess, mainly to the skill of my companion. There was not a pool, nor a linn, with which he was not familiarly acquainted. He knew to a tittle the kind of fly which the state of the river and the condition of the day demanded ; and he threw his line with such adroitness and dexterity, that

the most wary trout in the reach could scarcely avoid it. Moreover, I found him at the water's side, as I had found him at the dinner-table, an extremely entertaining companion. There appeared to be no limits to his conversational powers; his anecdotes and stories were endless, insomuch that I saw myself under the necessity of doing nothing more than occasionally to wind him up, and then let him run down at his leisure. Now to me this was exactly the most agreeable employment which I could have undertaken; and I indulged in it the more readily, because I was not slow in discovering, that it was not less agreeable to my companion. Among other subjects on which I endeavoured to draw him out, was the American war of Independence. From the tale which he had told on the preceding evening, as well as from his conversation in general, I learned that he had borne arms on that occasion; and I was curious to gather as much information as possible, respecting a contest, more prolific, perhaps, in personal adventure, than any other in which British soldiers have ever been engaged. I found him perfectly at home here, as on other topics; but it unfortunately happened,

that in the very campaign concerning which I was most inquisitive, he had not served; he was not attached to General Burgoyne's army, and as a necessary consequence, knew nothing, except by report, of its fortunes. "But your thirst for knowledge," continued he, "need not on that account remain unslaked. There is one among us, a Captain Macdirk, who acted no insignificant part on that occasion; though, like many other deserving men, he received but a scurvy reward; and I will, if you desire it, request him to give us this evening a connected narrative of his services." I expressed myself extremely anxious to obtain a minute account of an enterprise so memorable, more especially from an eye-witness; and the Major very cheerfully undertook to gratify my wishes. Nor did he disappoint me. Having again taken the chair at dinner in virtue of his hospitality towards me, the first person on whom he called, after the removal of the cloth, was Captain Macdirk, who with great good-humour, and numerous apologies for his own want of talent as a story-teller, began the following Legend of SARATOGA.

SARATOGA.

SARATOGA.

CHAPTER I.

SELDOM has Montreal witnessed a scene of higher excitement, or more warlike bustle, than was presented to the eyes of its inhabitants on the morning of the 8th of June, 1777. The first streaks of dawn were just beginning to redden the eastern sky, when a deafening roll of drums, and clamour of bugles, roused men, women, and children from their slumbers; whilst soldiers, pouring in great numbers from almost every habitation, hastened to assume their well-known stations. It was on this day, that General Burgoyne, having drawn together the

whole of his army, and made the best preparations which circumstances would allow for the transport of stores and provisions, resolved to commence his march in the direction of Fort Ticonderoga; and to open a campaign, from which the most brilliant results were expected to accrue to the cause of loyalty and good faith throughout America at large.

The corps of which General Burgoyne assumed the command, consisted, as I need scarcely inform my present auditors, of rather more than seven thousand men. It was made up of three thousand seven hundred and twenty-four British, three thousand and sixteen German soldiers of the line; of four hundred and seventy-three artillerymen, and two hundred and fifty Provincials; and the train of guns attached to it, fell not short of forty pieces, including cannons, mortars, and royals, of all kinds and calibres. I know very well that in these times it is a common practice to speak slightingly of the equipments and general appearance of the troops which served during the first American war. No doubt, some of their appointments were ridiculous enough; the little three-cornered hat, for

example, was but an inconvenient covering for a head liable to constant exposure both to sun and shower,—and the tight breeches and gaiters, with the long flapped coat, were not exactly calculated to give the greatest elasticity to the limbs, or freedom to the body. But in spite of these defects, if such they deserve to be called, you must permit me, who have looked upon the soldiers of both periods, to declare, that I never beheld a finer or more imposing band than was brought on this eventful day under my observation. The men were, for the most part, in the prime of life, well-made, robust, hardy, and active; they appeared to enjoy the finest health, and their spirits were mantling to the brim; whilst among the officers, one disposition, and one only, prevailed, from the hoary veteran down to the unfledged standard-bearer. They were all confident of success, and spoke and acted, not like persons embarking upon a business beset with perils, and of dubious issue, but as if a mere triumphal journey were before them.

I have said that this splendid regular army was accompanied by two hundred and fifty Pro-

vincials, raised for the service immediately in view, and acting as militia only. These men, on whose acquaintance with the nature of Indian warfare, and the general face of the country, considerable reliance was placed, were not embodied into one corps or battalion; on the contrary, they were divided into four independent companies, called Rangers, or Marksmen: of which three were composed of Canadians, the descendants of Frenchmen, and officered by their own feudal chiefs, or Seigneurs,—whilst one, made up of Scottish emigrants, or the descendants of old soldiers who had established themselves along the St. Lawrence as settlers, was headed by a gallant countrymen of their own, by name Fraser. The latter company received, as without incurring the charge of undue partiality I may be permitted to assert that it deserved, marked attention from the General commanding. One hundred young men, unrivalled in point of bodily strength and activity, composed it; whose habits from their childhood had been such as to inure them to the dnties of light troops, and whose aim with their own weapon, the rifle, was unerring. There

was not an individual among them, who would have been at a loss to find his way, had he been cast into the centre of a wilderness, provided only he were informed in what direction the point to be attained lay, and could obtain a sight of the sun by day, and the stars by night; and as to privations, cold, hunger, thirst, and bodily fatigue, they all to a man set such at defiance. It was my good fortune to commence my military career in that very distinguished company. Being nearly related to its commander, as well as his personal acquaintance, I readily accepted his invitation to accompany him in the character of a volunteer: with the assurance, not from him only, but from those higher in rank and of superior influence, that the first commission which should fall vacant, should be conferred upon me.

A young soldier is seldom very tardy in obeying the signal which summons him to the opening of his maiden campaign. The night of the 7th had been to me a sleepless one. Aware of the mighty movements which were in preparation, my mind was a great deal too busy in comparing the past with the future,

to permit my body to obtain much rest; and when I did fall into a doze, it was to dream sometimes of home, and the scenes of domestic happiness which had passed there; sometimes of my prospects, and intended behaviour before the enemy. From such a slumber as this, you will not be surprised to learn that the first blast of the bugle roused me. I leaped out of bed in a moment; hurried through my toilette as if life and death depended on its completion; and then, with all the ardour of a volunteer of seventeen, sallied forth into the street.

Here all was bustle and preparation; the hum of voices, the hurried tread of feet, the rattle of arms, and the occasional brief word of command, gave notice that, even in the dark, men knew their stations, and that they jostled one another in order to reach the several points where confusion would give place to absolute order. This state of things was not, however, of long continuance. Before the increasing dawn rendered objects distinctly visible, the only sound heard was a sort of stifled shuffling, as if officers were passing

along the fronts of companies to ascertain that they were correctly formed; and then, for the space of a quarter of an hour, or perhaps something more, all was silent as the grave.

Like those about me, I had taken my wonted station on the right of the company, and was watching with an anxiety, such as I never experienced before, the gradual approach of day, when a roll of drums, taken up in the rear, and passing on slowly to the front, gave notice that the General himself was on the ground. I looked back, and my glance fell upon a spectacle well calculated to inspire the most timid with courage and confidence. Upwards of four thousand men were behind me, formed in the nicest order into columns of subdivisions, and extending farther than the eye could reach, through the whole length of the street, into a common beyond; whilst their banners, held aloft as the General and his suite passed on, waved triumphantly in a slight breeze, which rose with the sun. As the mounted cavalcade swept along, regiment after regiment stood at attention, with bayonets fixed and muskets shoul-

dered, till at last it came to our turn, whose station lay at the head of the parade, to receive our chief. We did so, advancing our rifles, and holding ourselves steady to the front; while the General, pulling off his hat, answered the salute with a low bow. He then addressed himself to Captain Fraser in terms of high commendation as to the appearance and steadiness of his men; spoke cheeringly to the men themselves, by reminding them of the honourable post which they held; and then solemnly wishing God speed to the right, and the arms of our King and Country! gave the word to advance. It was answered by a hearty cheer, which rolled back like thunder from battalion to battalion; after which we struck off into threes from the right of companies, and the march began.

Long before this final movement was made, every door and window in Montreal was crowded with spectators, who bade us farewell with the waving of handkerchiefs, and some of them even with tears. Doubtless there were many in this warlike group, who felt at the moment what it is to leave behind those whom they

value more than life itself. For my own part, however, I experienced no such sensation. My acquaintance extended no farther than to the family where I had been accidentally billeted, and from whom, to say the truth, I had received no particular marks of attention; so I replied to the salutations of the people with the most perfect indifference, and moved on. In a few moments all thought of them and of the city was laid aside. I looked forward only to the great events in which I was about to be an actor; and my whole soul became occupied with anticipations as groundless as the rest of you, gentlemen, I do not doubt, cherished at the commencement of your career.

The spring of 1777 chanced to be remarkably inclement, even in this naturally inclement climate. Much heavy hard rain had fallen, which, cutting up the half-paved road that communicated between Montreal and Fort St. John, rendered our journey not only toilsome, but extremely tardy. It is true that every possible exertion had been used to remedy this evil, strong working-parties having been long employed in improving the old path, and cutting out a new

one; but their efforts had failed in rendering the way practicable for heavy carriages, and even the infantry experienced no little inconvenience in traversing it. Under these circumstances, it was judged necessary to divide our force; and to send the artillery, with the commissariat and hospital stores, under a competent escort from Quebec,—whilst we alone pushed across from Montreal by land, with directions to meet at a certain point near the southern extremity of Lake Champlain.

At the period to which my present narrative refers, there was nothing particularly interesting in the general appearance of the country which separates Montreal from the banks of the Chambly. For a while we advanced through the heart of an immense prairie, whose sandy surface was in many places left bare, and in others covered with huge patches of long dry grass; till by degrees the prairie gave place to stunted thickets, as these again were succeeded by a wide-spreading forest of tall trees and impervious underwood. The case was somewhat different, when, passing the forest, we began to face the stream, and took our toilsome journey

in the direction of Lake Champlain. At first, indeed, a broad and placid river, hedged in by low flat banks, covered, like the country beyond them, with majestic oaks, was all that marked the change ; but as we drew nearer and nearer to its source, the character of the stream varied, and the scenery assumed at every step more and more of the bearing of a Highland landscape. First the Narrows, about half way between Fort St. John and the mouth of the South river, drew powerfully upon the admiration of the stranger,—where the level banks gradually swelled into hillocks, and became at last little else than abrupt precipices,—and where the water, hemmed in by these rugged barriers, roared and fretted over its bed with the noise of a cataract. These passed, the eye was again delighted with a broad expanse, which, in its turn, led only to rapids and broken falls ; till at last, on nearing the point where it rushes from its gigantic prison, a scene of indescribable sublimity burst upon us. Before us lay the waters of Lake Champlain, an enormous sheet of unruffled glass, stretching away some ninety or a hundred miles to the south, and widening

and straitening as rocks and cliffs projected, in the most fantastic shapes, into its channel. Nor is the scene, like that beside Lake Erie or Ontario, rendered desolate by the very extent of water embraced in it. Though measuring, as I have already said, full a hundred miles in length, Lake Champlain nowhere exceeds fifteen, and in many places falls short of one mile, in breadth; whilst its bosom is beautifully diversified by islands and promontories, all of them rich with the most luxuriant vegetation and varied foliage. On each side, again, is a thick and uninhabited wilderness, now rising up into mountain, now falling down into glen: where the lordly oak mingles with the chesnut and the pine, and shrubs of every hue and form are abundant; while a noble background is presented towards the west by the Green Mountains, whose summits appear to pierce even into the clouds. I cannot by any powers of language do justice to such a scene, which to be understood must be looked upon; far less can I describe the emotions which it excited in me, on the day when I first beheld it.

I have said that throughout the whole of our journey we found the roads extremely bad, and that the march was in consequence performed, not only with great fatigue, but slowly. From the hour of our arrival at the Narrows, a series of difficulties came in our way, which it required all the patience and zeal of men and officers to meet and overcome. For the space of many miles, not only were the batteaux rendered useless, as a means of conveying the stores and guns; but both stores and vessels were necessarily dragged to the shore, and carried, by the land column, beyond the influence of the cataract. This fell heavily upon persons who, as is usual at the outset of an undertaking, were less able to cope with difficulties than after experience had taught them to disregard them; and it was the more burthensome at present, because through a distressing deficiency in horses, the men were compelled to perform tasks, upon which neither they nor their officers had been led to calculate. Nevertheless, every thing was done, if not without a murmur, at all events in perfect good-humour;

and we were rewarded for our exertions, by beholding the flotilla move in majestic order up the Lake.

The place of rendezvous fixed upon by General Burgoyne was the left bank of the river Bouquet, a small stream which, rising in the Green Mountains, falls into the Lake at no great distance frown Crown Point. The head of the column reached it on the 18th, having performed a march of upwards of ninety miles in ten days; and by the 26th, the rear was well closed up, and all the barges and vessels of war and transport were at anchor. Here tents, with other conveniencies, such as blankets, kettles, and culinary utensils of various kinds, were served out; and here, for the first time since quitting Montreal, was a regular encampment formed. And seldom has an army halted in a position more favourable. We occupied a beautiful valley, surrounded on three sides by gentle hills, and on the fourth by the Lake, sufficiently clear to allow of pasturage for our animals, yet wooded, so as to screen us from the rays of a summer's sun; whilst, our outposts stretching along the heights, which, in case of need, were marked out as the battle-

ground, every feeling of apprehension on the score of an attack was prevented.

You are, doubtless, aware that General Burgoyne took up his present ground, not so much with a view of refreshing his troops, as to make his final arrangements with certain Indian tribes, for whose assistance in the projected inroad he had already applied. Having appointed this spot as the proper point of conference, he was met, immediately on his arrival, by a runner, who informed him, that the Chiefs of the Five Nations, with a formidable body of warriors, were encamped in the hills, and ready to receive him. The General made no hesitation as to complying with the proposition of these chiefs: he appointed the 21st as the day of meeting; and he set out at an early hour, attended by most of his principal officers, under an escort of certain light companies, to keep his appointment.

As Fraser's riflemen were so fortunate as to compose part of the force employed on this occasion, I had an opportunity of being an eye-witness to the ceremonies which ensued; and extremely curious as well as interesting they proved to be. After a short march of

about half a mile, in a direction towards the source of the Bouquet, we arrived at a sort of glade, or woody ravine, in which a band of four hundred warriors were assembled, their tents or wigwams being but partially concealed along the side of a sloping eminence, in the rear. Nothing could exceed the grotesque but striking appearance which that extraordinary group presented. As we entered the valley at the lower end, the assembly, which occupied the opposite extremity, gradually opened upon us, and we beheld them seated cross-legged, and in profound silence, except three or four chiefs, who alone stood upright. Having advanced within a short distance of them, the escort halted, when the General proceeded alone towards the front, and made the sign of peace, by raising his hands in the air, and then laying them on his bosom. The chiefs immediately acknowledged the salutation, approached him, knelt down, and kissed his hand in token both of amity and submission. He was then invited to sit, the chiefs seating themselves near him; and for some moments all were again silent.

Whilst these ceremonies were passing between the leaders of the two hosts, both the warriors and the General's escort maintained an attitude of perfect indifference and self-possession. The former appeared, indeed, to take no interest whatever in matters which were well known to have occupied long and painfully their whole thoughts; but when the interpreter arose, and gave notice that the English Chief was about to speak, they drew gradually round him, and listened with the deepest attention. You might have heard a pin drop at every interval in a discourse which assured this savage throng of the esteem and protection of their Great Father; and when the conditions on which their services would be accepted and rewarded, came to be explained, their very breathing seemed repressed, lest the most minute syllable should escape them. It was not, however, in accordance with their dispositions or tastes to be told that all bloodshed, except in fair fight, was prohibited; and that he who took the scalp of a woman or a child, or put to death a prisoner who had once submitted, would receive, not reward,

but the most summary punishment. A gloomy silence, interrupted only by an occasional low growl, followed the conclusion of this portion of the address; indeed, it appeared as if the very purpose for which the assembly had been called together was about to be defeated. But at last an old chief, whom we observed whispering, for some time, first to one and then to another of the warriors near him, stood up, and spoke with extreme vehemence of manner, as follows:

"I stand up in the name of all the nations present, to assure our father that we have attentively listened to his discourse. We receive you as our father, because, when you speak, we hear the voice of our Great Father beyond the great lake. We rejoice in the approbation you have expressed of our behaviour. We have been tried and tempted by the Bostonians; but we have loved our father, and our hatchets have been sharpened upon our affections. In proof of the sincerity of our professions, our whole villages, able to go to war, are come forth. The old and infirm, our infants and squaws, alone remain at home. With one

common assent we promise a constant obedience to all you may order; and may the Father of days give you many, and success !"

This brief address was received on our parts with expressions of satisfaction, by the Indians with a murmur of approval; after which the congress, as it was called, breaking up, we returned, as we had come forth, to the camp.

CHAPTER II.

NOTHING particularly worthy of being mentioned occurred from this date, up to the arrival of the last day in June. It is true that on the morning after the palaver, the whole army with its Indian allies moved forward; but the movement carried us no farther than to Crown Point, about thirty miles in advance of the Bouquet, and half that distance from Ticonderoga. Here the tents were again pitched; and here, for something more than a week, we enjoyed as much of relaxation and social amusement, as men in our circumstances could desire. I say social amusement, for seldom has an army, in progress towards the heart of an enemy's country, marched, as we marched on that occasion.

Among our camp followers were ladies of all ranks and descriptions, the wives of generals, and officers in command of regiments, as well as of subalterns and privates, who, being abundantly supplied with the means of conveyance, travelled with their children, servants, and household stuff, in their train. The consequence was, that but a short space apart from the tents of the men, stood the marquees of the Baroness Reidesdel, the Lady Harriet Ackland, with many others, who made it their business to receive, as often as circumstances would allow, crowds of visitors to their evening parties. You may smile, gentlemen, if you please, at this account, but I assure you that it is strictly true; and though I dare say the animals required to convey these ladies and their appurtenances, might have been employed more beneficially for the good of the service, Heaven forbid that even now I should raise my voice against them! I have spent few evenings more pleasantly, than I spent under their hospitable canvass, in the position of Crown Point.

It was not, however, in such occupations as these, that General Burgoyne expended the

whole of these eight days. He carefully matured his plans, established depots and magazines, reviewed his army, and distributed it as follows:

The entire force, numbering, as I have already stated, something more than seven thousand men, was divided into five corps or columns, one of which received the appellation of the advance, another of the reserve, and the remaining three of brigades. The advance, to which our company was attached, consisted of the British light infantry and grenadiers, the 24th regiment, the Indians, placed particularly under Captain Fraser's orders, a body of Canadians, and ten pieces of light cannon. It was led by Brigadier-general Fraser, an officer of great promise and high character, and mustered in all about fifteen hundred men. The reserve, under Lieutenant Colonel Breyman, was composed of Germans, namely, of the Brunswick Chasseurs, a remarkably fine battalion, and the grenadiers and light companies of the other regiments. Of the composition of the three brigades it is not necessary that I should say more, than that two of them were made up of British, one of German troops, and that they were seve-

rally commanded by Major-general Philips, Brigadier-general Hamilton, and Major-general Reidesdel. The latter had under his orders a regiment of German dragoons; but they were not mounted, there being at this time barely horses enough in camp to supply the wants of the ladies, the General and staff officers, and to drag a slender portion of our somewhat cumbrous and overgrown artillery.

It was on a beautiful morning, the last in the month of June, that the advance, after standing the customary time under arms, began its march. As we were now in the immediate vicinity of the enemy, and knew not how soon his outposts might be fallen in with, our progress this day was at once more circumspect, and more interesting, than any which we had yet made. The Indians, supported by the Marksmen, formed the advanced patrols, and spread themselves in a disorderly, but efficient manner, over the front and flank of the column. They were armed with rifles, knives, and tomahawks, and being in their war-paint, presented an appearance, which, to the eye of one unaccustomed to such spectacles, must have been extremely imposing.

We, again, sending out a few files to communicate with them, and prevent the possibility of a surprise, advanced in a compact body, about two hundred yards in their rear. Another interval, similar to that which separated the Marksmen from the Indians, now occurred, after which came the head of the Light Brigade, its guns being in the centre, between the grenadiers and light companies, and the 24th regiment. Then followed the heavy brigades in their respective orders; and the whole was covered in rear by scattered parties, similar to those which protected it in front.

Our march, though silent, proved upon the whole an extremely interesting and agreeable one. In the first place, the face of the country became at every step more and more striking, the hills assuming a rougher and bolder outline, and the wood becoming more broken and irregular; whilst the lake, along the margin of which our column moved, seemed alive with the galleys and small frigates of which our fleet was composed. In the next place, the thought of what might be impending,—the expectation of meeting at every pass an

armed force prepared to defend it, caused us to look with more than ordinary interest upon surrounding objects; whilst an occasional whoop, sometimes a straggling shot, sounding through the woods, kept up to its highest pitch the anxiety of those who heard it. All these combinations of sight and sound, struck forcibly upon the imaginations of men to whom such things were new: nor was their power diminished when an aid-de-camp riding up, gave directions for the leading files to turn to the right, and prepare for immediate action. There was an excitement in the very word which caused the blood to rush back to its fountain, and the colour to forsake the cheeks even of the bravest, for a moment; but it was destined to lead to nothing. The detachment which we expected to engage, fell back as soon as our Indians showed themselves, and that night we bivouacked in quiet at Three Mile Point.

Ticonderoga, the place against which our first operations were directed, stands upon a peninsula or point of land, which is washed on one side by Lake Champlain, on another by Lake George, and on a third by the confluence

of the latter lake with the South river. The front of this position, as then occupied by the enemy, lay between Lakes George and Champlain, bending round in a sort of semicircle; the whole of which was covered with redoubts, batteries, traverses, and abattis: its left was appuyed by three block-houses, and some fortified mills; its right by two block-houses and a battery, which looked towards Lake Champlain. Across the lake, and communicating by means of a flying bridge with the main position, stood Mount Independence, its summit strongly fortified, and well supplied with artillery; whilst along its base ran rows of abattis, with here and there a flêche, and breastwork for infantry. To protect the bridge, again, the Rebels had constructed a boom, composed of large pieces of timber well secured together, and riveted with bolts of iron; and the boom was, in its turn, covered by a double iron chain, the links of which measured an inch and a half in diameter. On the whole, the post was at once a vitally important and exceedingly formidable one; and, as it was understood to be well manned, and amply supplied with all man-

ner of stores and provisions, there were few amongst us who anticipated any other result besides a protracted and desperate resistance.

With such a prospect before us, it is scarcely necessary to say, that the night of the 1st of July was, to many, one of the deepest interest and most intense anxiety. We had halted, just before dark, on an eminence, barely three miles from the enemy's position; and the blaze of their fires became, as night drew on, distinctly visible. We saw them stretching far and wide in long and formidable array; now shining clear and bright on the brow of a bare hill, now sending up a dark red mass of vapour from among trees and underwood in the hollows; whilst from time to time their brilliancy would disappear, as heaps of fuel were thrown on, only that it might burst forth again with increased splendour. Nor was the spectacle embraced by a glance in the opposite direction less striking or less warlike. There lay our own army in two magnificent lines, part occupying this side, part the opposite side of the lake; whilst the Royal George and Inflexible frigates, with a squadron of gun-boats and lug-

gers, kept up the communication; and the very extent of these seemed to convey an assurance that we exceeded the enemy in numbers, no less than we knew that we surpassed them in the quality and constitution of our troops. But it was not by looking to generals alone, that a tyro like myself found his courage involuntarily increased. Around me were crowds of hardy veterans, whose free and merry chat, their careless laugh, and lively repartee, could not be listened to by any one without emotion; since it was impossible not to believe that they were thus light-hearted, because they entertained not the shadow of a misgiving as to the result. I need not describe to men who have breathed the atmosphere of a bivouac, the effect which these sights and sounds produced. Even upon Fraser, cool and deliberative as he was, they were not without their influence. They stirred up in him numerous warlike associations, bringing the events of other days vividly to his remembrance; and never had story-teller a more willing auditor than I proved when he began their recital. Thus, in listening to his accounts of former bivouacs, which he occasionally in-

terrupted as the wild notes of the soldiers' songs rose high, I passed the better portion of that night; nor did I so much as lie down till long after he had ceased to speak, and the majority of the army were fast asleep.

It was still dark, when a general stir among the troops put an end to my slumbers. I started up, and found that our people were already forming, though, whether as a measure of mere precaution, or as a preparation for an attack, no one appeared to know. Like the rest, I seized my arms, and hurried to my post; but hour after hour stole on, without bringing matters to an issue, and when day had fully dawned, we were still stationary. At last an order arrived for the men to pile their arms, and prepare breakfast; and it was surmised at once, that on this day at least, no attempt would be made upon the enemy's entrenchments.

Though disappointed in no trifling degree at the tenor of these instructions, we lost no time in carrying them implicitly into effect. We addressed ourselves to the office of cooking, and a hearty meal came not the less accept-

ably on account of the regret which we could not but experience that our moments should be wasted at a juncture so critical. This was barely finished, and Fraser and myself were preparing to pass the day as men are accustomed to spend their time in camp during a season of temporary rest, when a dense smoke suddenly rising from the left of the enemy's position, arrested our attention. An alarm spread that the Rebels were moving, and the bugles sounding to arms, the troops were accoutred and in order of march in five minutes. By and by, an Indian was seen at full speed hastening from the outposts, who paused only to ascertain where General Burgoyne was to be found, and then hurried on, without so much as dropping a hint touching the cause of his abrupt arrival. As a matter of course, these occurrences happening thus closely the one upon the other, stirred up in us a confident expectation of immediate service; nor were we deceived. The Indian had not passed ten minutes, when an aid-de-camp made his appearance on the ground, with orders for Fraser's Marksmen and the Red Warriors to move briskly to the left, and

the rest of the brigade to advance at the same moment more slowly and steadily to the front. The Rebels, it appeared, having set fire to their block-house, and abandoned the saw-mills, were concentrating upon their main position: to prevent which, by cutting off the corps in retrogression, was the design of our present movement.

Not a moment was lost in carrying these orders into execution. Whilst the main body, in compact and imposing array, took the road to Mount Hope; the marksmen with their savage allies filed to the left, and were soon concealed from the observation both of friends and foes, in a deep forest. But we were guided by a savage, to whom every foot of ground in this country was familiar. He led us through a winding glen round the base of the very hill from which the enemy's column was ascertained to be descending, and brought us to a point of all others the best suited for the particular object which we desired to attain. It was a thick copse skirting the open path which communicated between the saw-mills and the lines, and by which the garrison of the former

must of necessity pass, in order to effect a junction with their comrades.

We lay here perhaps a quarter of an hour, when the scouts who had been extended to the right, in order to give notice of the enemy's movements, came in with intelligence that they were approaching. Every man was instantly on the *qui vive*, and with the exception of a ticking of gun-locks, not a sound could be heard from one flank of the ambuscade to the other. We now listened, with what feelings I leave you to judge, for the tread of feet; nor did any great space of time elapse ere it became audible. It was easily ascertained, likewise, from the cadence of the march, that a considerable body of men were near us, and that they were pursuing their journey, rapidly indeed, but apparently in little order, and altogether unsuspicious of danger. All this was as it was desired to be. The great end to be obtained by us, was to permit the enemy's line of march to come so completely in contact with us, that every shot thrown in upon their flank would tell; and had this been done, there is little probability that a man of the detached corps would have escaped. But, strange to

say, the Indians, on other occasions so noted for patience, ruined all by precipitancy. The head of the enemy's column was yet a full hundred yards from our ambuscade, when several of the Red Warriors fired. Their example was instantly followed by the whole body, who threw away their ammunition for no purpose, and then springing forward with hideous yells, rushed hatchet in hand towards the Rebels. The latter, who had halted and begun to form, as soon as the first shots alarmed them, now broke and fled in all directions; and though we, as well as the Indians, pursued with all our might, they easily contrived to outstrip us. Scarcely a dozen men fell under the scattering fire which was kept up upon them; and the remainder escaped, by twos and threes, within their lines.

Nothing could exceed the chagrin and mortification experienced by our gallant leader on this occasion,—a feeling in which his company, one and all, deeply shared Our plans had been digested with so much care, and matters had, up to the last moment, proceeded so happily, that we laid our account with a victory, not more easy of attainment, than important in its results.

Our disappointment was, in consequence, the greater, when the miserable issue became certain; nor was it possible to hinder the men from expressing themselves in terms which were far from proving satisfactory to the haughty savages. From that time, it may be said that all cordiality between us and the Indians ceased. The latter followed us, indeed, in the hope of plunder, and because they regarded us as the more powerful of the belligerent parties; but they were no longer allies on whom it would have been prudent to depend in case of any serious difficulties or reverses. Nevertheless, the reconnoissance, generally, was not without its advantages. Fraser's and Philips's corps possessed themselves of Mount Hope, a point from which a commanding view could be obtained over the whole chain of the enemy's works; and here we passed the night, as we had done the preceding, in bivouac round our fires.

Little occurred during the two following days worthy of particular notice. The enemy having turned a battery of four pieces towards the ground of our encampment, kept up a ceaseless cannonade, from which no loss, and very

little uneasiness was experienced; whilst on our parts the greatest exertions were made to bring up guns, stores, baggage, and provisions. But with the exception of a trifling skirmish or two of no moment at the outposts, all remained, as far as we were concerned, profoundly quiet. But decisive measures were nevertheless in progress, and steps were quietly but surely taken to render the lines of Ticonderoga untenable.

On the south side of the communication between Lakes George and Champlain, stands a bold and rocky mountain, called Mount Defiance, which completely commands and overlooks both the Fort of Ticonderoga, and the line of entrenchments which leant upon it. How the enemy came to neglect this height I know not, unless indeed the abruptness of its ascent led them to suppose that it would be impracticable to drag cannon to its summit, and hence that its occupation by us would either not be attempted, or if attempted would produce no useful consequences. If such was really their expectation, nothing could be more groundless; for the hill being seized in the night by a party

of light infantry, long before dawn some pieces of heavy artillery were at its base, and the most active preparations were immediately made for transporting them, with a due supply of ammunition, to the summit. But for the latter operation there was no need. The enemy no sooner observed that we had established a post there, than the perils of their situation became manifest to them, and their future exertions were directed exclusively to secure a speedy and safe retreat.

On the night of the 5th of July, it fell to the lot of Fraser's Marksmen to be put in charge of a picket. The proximity of our post, which lay about half-way down the steep, and on that side of the hill which commands a view of Ticonderoga, enabled us to ascertain with perfect accuracy all that was passing within the lines. Not a movement was made, nor a word spoken, which our advanced sentries failed to detect; and as we had been particularly cautioned to keep our senses fully on the alert, there was no lack of attention on the part either of men or officers. For some hours after sunset all things went on as they had been in the

habit of proceeding during many evenings before. The American videttes took their customary stations upon the rampart, and a patrol pushed out from time to time, felt its way, as it had previously done, as far as the challenge of our people permitted. In like manner we stole forward at intervals, so as to look down into the ditch; and except when an occasional shot told that one or other of these reconnoitring parties had been discovered, nothing took place calculated to draw our thoughts out of their ordinary channel. But things were destined not to continue thus for ever. Midnight must have been close at hand when a change took place in the order of affairs; and our vigilance, which had begun in some degree to relax, was again called into full exercise.

The moon, which during the early part of the night shed a feeble glimmer abroad, sank beneath the horizon, and its setting was followed by an exceedingly thick darkness. No stars could be distinguished, for there was a sort of fog hanging in the atmosphere which completely shrouded them, though it gave no indication of rain or stormy weather: when there

arose all at once from the interior of the fort and lines a clamour of voices, as if thousands of persons were anxious to give, and none willing to receive instructions. This was followed by a sudden smothering up of the fires, which had hitherto smouldered redly and gloomily; and then a confused tread of feet, like that of men hurrying to and fro in confusion, became distinctly audible. As we were fully aware of the great importance of Mount Defiance as well to the enemy as to ourselves, the idea naturally occurred, that a sortie was about to be made; and we stood to our arms in the firm expectation that in a few moments more we should be engaged. But after listening with intense anxiety a full hour, during which time not a shot nor a challenge gave warning of advancing columns, that suspicion gradually yielded to another, and we began to calculate upon the very manœuvre which General St. Clair was performing. Information was accordingly sent to General Fraser's head quarters, and we held ourselves in readiness to act in any manner which he might point out.

Whilst the rest of the company remained in

an attitude of defence, I took with me a single trusty companion, and stole forward with the view of penetrating, if possible, within the Rebel works, and of ascertaining by personal observation the object of this commotion. The darkness favoured us greatly, and we found, on reaching the crest of the glacis, that the sentinels, more attentive to what was passing among their friends than their enemies, paid no heed whatever to us or our movements. We accordingly descended, unnoticed, into the ditch, and turning to the right groped our way along, till a palisade friezed at the top, arrested us. With some difficulty we scrambled over it; after which we found ourselves in a covered way leading from one of the more advanced works into the body of the place, and beheld a large portion of the American army formed beside their fires, at the distance of some twenty or thirty paces from the spot where we were standing. Fortunately for us, these men were too busy to overhear the noise which we had made in passing the palisade; and though the light of their fires rendered them visible to us, we, who kept in the shade, remained concealed. We

instantly crouched down upon our bellies, and creeping close to the parapet, lay at length under its shadow, where we could overhear distinctly every word that was spoken, and yet ran little risk of detection.

A few minutes sufficed to complete what now proved to be the preparatory arrangement of the parade,—when a mounted officer giving the word "March," the enemy's column advanced, to our great horror, along the covered way. They moved, however, in the strictest order, and in profound silence, no man apparently looking either to his right or left; and two entire battalions filed past, within three feet of us, without discovering that we were there. How my comrade felt during this tremendous interval I know not, but I confess that with me physical alarm far outweighed every other emotion; and that I did not even attempt to ascertain the numbers or quality of the troops which passed me thus closely. On the contrary, I lay flat upon my face, keeping my mouth close to the ground, lest my breathing, or the violent beating of my heart should betray me; nor was it till the receding noise of footsteps assured me of

danger past, that I took courage to look round. That glance, however, proved abundantly satisfactory. It informed me that the Rebels were gone, that the fort and lines were entirely evacuated, and that the enemy, from whom we anticipated a resistance so desperate, were in full retreat. With feelings of the liveliest satisfaction we hastened back to our post in order to report this very unlooked-for event to our commander; and in two hours after, the whole British army was roused, and a vigorous pursuit begun.

CHAPTER III.

General Burgoyne, who had passed the night on board one of the frigates, was no sooner informed of the enemy's flight, than he made dispositions to follow them up with the greatest vigour. The fleet immediately weighed anchor, and bearing down with irresistible impetuosity upon the boom, destroyed in the course of two hours, a barrier which it had occupied almost as many weeks to construct. This done, and a considerable body of troops embarked, all sail was set in pursuit of the American flotilla, of which, long before evening, our brave seamen gave, to use their own phraseology, an excellent account. They overtook their opponents moored, and perfectly ignorant of their danger, beside the

wharf at Skeensborough ; and though they failed in making many prisoners, every galley and batteau was either captured or destroyed.

In the mean while our brigade, followed, at an interval somewhat too great by that of General Reidesdel, crossed Lake Champlain, and commenced a rapid pursuit after the enemy's land column, which was ascertained to have fallen back on the road to Hubberton. No great while elapsed ere the Marksmen and Indians, of whom the advanced guard was composed, overtook the rear of the flying enemy, when a broken and desultory, but not very destructive skirmish, began. But though interesting enough to witness, the skirmish led to no important results; for the country was thick and encumbered, the enemy quick in their movements, and our people, worn out with a night of watching, began before long to exhibit symptoms of fatigue. Besides, we were far a-head of all support, even the rest of the brigade being many miles behind us; and hence, whatever advantages we might happen to obtain, could not, for want of physical force, be turned

to account. Our leader, under these circumstances, determined, after driving in the rear of the Americans upon their main body, to halt; and this he accordingly did in a grove not far from Castletown; where our people, after refreshing themselves from the contents of their havresacks, lay down, and slept soundly for about two hours.

Whilst we were thus employed, General Reidesdel, with his brigade, came up, and a sort of council of war was immediately held between him and our Brigadier. The latter, having ascertained that the enemy's rear-guard was in force, and that it lay considerably apart from the main body, being only three leagues a-head of our present position, suggested the possibility of cutting it off; and proposed for that purpose to resume his march, so that he might pass the night in the immediate presence of the Americans. By this means he hoped to take them by surprise on the first return of light; and he entertained no doubt, in case this could be done, of obtaining an easy victory. General Reidesdel, though naturally cautious, offered no objection to the measure; our people were accor-

dingly roused about an hour before sunset, and we once more advanced with great caution and in good order. Every thing was conducted with the happiest success. No scouts or flying parties met us, and we bivouacked that night within three miles of the American pickets, which entertained not the slightest suspicion that we had passed Castletown. I need not add, that strenuous exertions were used to hinder the intelligence of our approach from reaching them. No fires were lighted, nor did any man dream of wandering beyond the ground of the bivouac; indeed, the sentries received strict orders not to permit any individual, no matter what his rank or occupation might be, to pass their chain either to the front or rear. All parties obeyed these instructions with the most exact fidelity, and the success of the morrow's operations served amply to recompense the corps for the privations to which this temporary confinement subjected them.

It was yet perfectly dark, when the word to rise and fall in, passed quietly from man to man, put an end to our repose. It was obeyed in profound silence; and in silence equally pro-

found, our little column pushed forward. We followed a sort of rude path through the heart of a forest, which seemed to have been lately cut, and led to the point where the roads from Skeensborough to Hubberton and Charlestown in the New Hampshire Grants diverge. It was here that we came in sight of the American outposts. They occupied the ridge of a steep hill, sending down their sentries almost to its base; and though it was very evident, from the bustle which pervaded them, that our arrival had not been anticipated, they nevertheless stood to their arms like men, and made ready to receive us.

To dislodge them from the high ground, and take possession of it ourselves, was the work of a moment. Not a shot, indeed, was fired on our side, in bringing this about; nor did the enemy pause for more than a single discharge, when, setting the orders and remonstrances of their officers at defiance, they broke, and fled with precipitation down the opposite slope. There they joined the main body, which, we were given to understand, fell not short of fifteen hundred men; and which, under the

orders of a gallant soldier, Colonel Francis, was already in order either to receive or give an attack.

For a moment or two after our little column crowned the ridge, there was a sort of pause, during which the hostile leaders mutually reconnoitred the force and dispositions of the enemy. It was sufficient to satisfy both of the steps which it behoved them to follow, and it was not needlessly protracted. There was a commanding hill on the left, which to both parties presented peculiar advantages, and General Fraser instantly resolved to occupy it. For this purpose, Fraser's Marksmen were directed to move off in double quick time,—an order which was promptly obeyed; but we were yet half way from the summit, when an American detachment showed itself pushing for the same point, and ascending by one side, as we mounted the other. The enemy crowned the hill before us; and saluting us, as we drew near, with a sharp volley, seemed resolute to maintain it. But their resolution soon gave way. Raising a cheer, we rushed forward, firing in files as we proceeded; upon which the enemy first wavered,

then fell back, and finally fled in confusion. We gave them no time to rally, but, rushing down the declivity in pursuit, found ourselves in a few moments warmly engaged with a force which at the most moderate calculation doubled us in numbers.

The Americans felt their superiority, and being well led on by a very brave soldier, they stood their ground nobly. Declining a little to their right, they soon outflanked us, and poured in so heavy a fire from behind certain logs and fallen trees, that the Indians gave way, and we ourselves were compelled, after losing several of our comrades, to yield ground. But at this moment, two companies of grenadiers scrambling up the steep face of Mount Pitsford, unexpectedly showed themselves upon our left; when the enemy were again checked, again wavered, and appeared on the point of giving way. Colonel Francis, however, was too well aware of the importance of this height, lightly to abandon it. He brought up fresh troops, giving them courage and confidence by his example; and, rallying the fugitives round him, renewed the contest with obstinate valour.

The firing now extended on both sides from right to left of the line, both parties fighting, as the nature of the country required, *à la tirailleur;* but there was this marked difference between them, that the American skirmishers were animated by seeing their support at hand, whereas we were far in advance of ours, and knew not when it might arrive. Happily, however, it was not very distant. General Reidesdel had heard the firing, and pressed on with the head of his column; and he brought up about two hundred men at a moment when they were sorely needed; these no sooner showed themselves than a panic seized the Americans, who broke, and fled in all directions. Nothing could exceed the gallantry of Colonel Francis at this juncture. He rode from rank to rank, and from man to man, seizing some by the collar, striking others with the flat of his sword, and cheering, and doing his utmost to arrest the flight; nor is it by any means impossible, considering the great superiority of the enemy's numbers, that even now his efforts might have insured the victory. But just as he had succeeded in rallying a few companies, and was

advancing boldly at their head, a bullet struck him in the throat, and he fell lifeless from his horse. The Rebels scarcely paused to look upon him as he lay. They fled in a body like sheep when faced by a strange dog; and diving into the recesses of the forest, were soon beyond the reach of any other than a scattered and disorderly pursuit.

Our loss in this affair was not great, and the facility with which a half brigade, mustering in all no more than eight hundred and fifty men, had driven a very superior force from a position of great strength and difficulty, served not a little to increase the confidence which all of us experienced, both in ourselves and in our leaders. We assembled upon the field in that state of excitement, which invariably affects men after an affair in which they have been victorious, and prepared to push forward whithersoever the General might direct; but the last glimmer of light having already expired, and the troops suffering severely from fatigue and inanition, it was not judged prudent to advance far beyond the ground which we had won. A bivouac was accordingly formed just in front of the position lately occu-

pied by the enemy, where our little corps was soon joined by the rest of the German brigade; and here, after burying the dead, arranging the pickets, and regaling ourselves upon such provision as still remained in our havresacks, we passed an extremely agreeable and quiet night,—I need not say that our slumbers were thoroughly unbroken.

Long before dawn on the morning of the 8th, our little column was again under arms; and having waited only till there was light enough to guide our steps, the march, in the direction of Skeensborough was resumed. This was certainly not one of the many pleasant days which it has been my good fortune to pass in the service. When we first fell in, the heavens were black with clouds; and the movement had scarcely commenced, ere the rain began to descend with a degree of violence, such as in England, at least, cannot be conceived. It was not so much a shower, as a sheet of water, which came as if a river had been diverted from its course, and was falling over some broken bank; insomuch that in five minutes there was not a man in the whole corps whose gar-

ments were not thoroughly saturated. Nevertheless we pushed on, if not with our usual cheerfulness, at all events without repining, and came in without the occurrence of a single adventure, soon after noon, to Skeensborough. It was a large and thriving village, well situated at the extremity of Lake Champlain, at the head of Wood Creek, and near the confluence of the South and East rivers; and could boast even then of a tolerable wharf, beside which was moored the whole of our flotilla, whilst the head-quarters of the army were established in the town itself. I need scarcely add, that we found all classes of persons here in the highest imaginable spirits. The fleet and army, though acting independently of one another—the latter, indeed, in numerous petty detachments, and as it were in detail—had proved victorious every where; and of the good effects of victory at the outset of a campaign, every one acquainted with such matters must be aware. There was not a man attached to the expedition who appeared to doubt as to its ultimate success, or desired any thing farther than permission to press forward without a moment's delay. Un-

fortunately, however, the General saw, or imagined obstacles, such as to hinder his immediate indulgence of that gallant longing. The detached parties being called in, a second review took place, after which we were formally placed in position; and from that hour our privations, as well as evil fortune, may be said to have had their commencement.

By this new arrangement the main body of the army found itself placed in line along the heights of Skeensborough, with its left upon Wood Creek, and its right on a rugged mountain. To protect it from any thing like surprise, as well as to secure water carriage in all directions, flying corps were at the same time established at various points,—one upon the Castletown road, another upon the roads to Putney and Rutland, and a third in communication between East river and Castletown. This done, strong working-parties were sent out day after day, for the purpose of removing such obstacles as the enemy had thrown in the way of our farther progress. I need scarcely remind you, that forty years ago British armies moved rather more according to rule than they

do at present, and that the possibility of undertaking any thing until magazines had been established, was rarely, if ever admitted. In the true spirit of these tactics, it was no sooner discovered that the enemy, by sinking stones and logs of wood in the channel of Wood Creek, had rendered the navigation difficult, except to the lightest batteaux, than the whole army was employed in weighing them; and as we were miserably supplied with the implements necessary for such operations, our progress was at once very slow and very painful. Then again, though the greater portion of the summer was yet before us, and the country abounded with wood and other natural cover, it was deemed totally irregular to move without tents; and as these had all been left behind at Ticonderoga, much precious time was expended in bringing them up. The consequence of all this was, first, that the enemy were enabled to collect their scattered columns, to cut up the roads in our front, and mature their plans for defence; and secondly, that the ardour of our own people, which, had proper advantage been taken of it, would have over-

come all difficulties, was allowed to evaporate. Though we reached Skeensborough on the 9th, the end of June was at hand ere we quitted it, and the 30th found us only at Fort Edward: twenty days having been expended in traversing twenty miles of road, which the labour of our own hands had constructed.

It is not worth while to offer any lengthened detail of our proceedings for some time after we had reached that fort. They resembled in most particulars those which marked our previous progress; for the enemy having retreated to Saratoga, on the other side of the river, the faint hope which had been nourished of bringing them to action disappeared. Let it suffice to pronounce these melancholy words —We halted. True, our provisions were short,—how could they be otherwise, with an army which marched at the rate of only one mile per day?—and our chief could not go on till he had collected supplies, sufficient to insure him against all risk of starving; but the halt was the reverse of a season of rest to the unfortunate troops, who were more than ever oppressed in bringing up stores, which, had

common diligence been used, would not have been needed. Not a day passed which saw not whole brigades, executing the offices of baggage animals, carrying by manual labour stores which were consumed as fast as brought up, and wasting their strength for no purpose. But there is as little satisfaction in reporting such transactions, as in listening to the report when made. Let me therefore avail myself of this leisure to state to you more fully than I have yet done, the general plan of the campaign in which we were now embarked.

The great object which General Burgoyne sought to obtain was to force his way down the course of the Hudson's, and rallying round him, as he proceeded, as many loyalists as chose to follow his fortunes, to effect a junction with the army of General Howe, then blockaded in New York. To facilitate this measure, by distracting the attention of the enemy, a smaller expedition, under the orders of Colonel St. Leger, had been organized, which, moving through the western part of Chester County, threatened Fort Stanwix, a rudely fortified station upon the Mohawks. Colonel St. Leger's force was ex-

tremely weak, particularly in troops of the line,—of which no more than four hundred, and those composed of detachments from different regiments, served under him ; and the whole, including Provincials, Canadians, and some hundreds of Indians, barely came up to twelve hundred men. He pushed forward, however, with great diligence, and on the 3d of August invested the fortress, sending intelligence at the same time to the General in Chief of his situation ; and in two days afterwards he had the good fortune to surprise and cut to pieces a body of eight hundred Americans, when on their march to relieve the garrison. So far all things had succeeded according to our wish ; but Colonel St. Leger gradually found, that in the expectations which he had been led to form respecting the loyalty of the inhabitants of the invaded district, the grossest impositions had been practised on him. Instead of crowds of volunteers, scarcely an individual came to his camp ; and of the few who did come, it was more than suspected, that by far the greater proportion came with a treacherous intention.

That these advantages, trifling as they were, might not be wholly wasted, it became incumbent on General Burgoyne to advance without delay,—whilst the deplorable deficiency in the means of transport under which he laboured, seemed to render all attempts at moving the army fruitless. Though our troops had toiled without intermission during three whole weeks, there was in camp no greater stock of provisions than promised to suffice for four days' consumption; and to move forward with a supply so slender, into a desert country, appeared to a leader of the old school little better than insanity. I have called it a desert country, not only with reference to its natural sterility,—and Heaven knows it was sterile enough,—but because of the pains which were taken, and unfortunately with too great success, to sweep its few cultivated spots of all articles likely to benefit the invaders. In doing this, the Rebels showed no clemency either to friend or foe. All the fields of standing corn were laid waste, the cattle was driven away, and every particle of grain, as well as morsel of grass, carefully removed,—so that we could depend for sub-

sistence, both for men and horses, only upon the magazines which we might ourselves establish. But our draft animals were so inadequate to the conveyance of stores, that no magazine had as yet been formed farther in advance than Fort George ; and Fort George was too much in the rear to be of service as a base of operations, after we should have quitted the position which we now occupied.

I have said that the American army retreated as we advanced, cutting up the roads, and devastating the face of the country over which they passed. They were now, according to the best accounts which we could receive, at Saratoga, a hamlet, or rather farm on the left bank of the Hudson's, and about half way between Fort Edward and the Mohawks. It seemed advisable to General Burgoyne to threaten them there : for if they risked an action, he had no apprehensions as to the result ; if they retired, Colonel St. Leger would be in their rear ; and should they succeed in escaping both divisions, then was the road to Albany thrown open, and the principal design of the inroad attained. Increased exertions were ac-

cordingly used to bring a flotilla from the lakes to the nearest navigable point in the river; and so unremitting were they, that before the close of the first week in August, a considerable number of boats and barges, laden with such stores as could be forwarded, were launched upon the stream, and ready to accompany the army.

Whilst these projects were in contemplation, and the above means adopted for bringing them to an issue, a piece of information was obtained at head-quarters, which promised to bring about the happiest results, by relieving us at once from all the embarrassments attendant upon meagre supplies and inadequate means of transport. About twenty miles to the eastward of the Hudson's, lies the obscure village of Bennington, — a cluster of poor cottages, situated in a wild country, between the forks of the Hossac. Here the enemy had gathered together a considerable depôt of cattle, corn, horses, and wheel carriages, most of which were drawn across the Connecticut River from the provinces of New England; and as

it was understood to be guarded by a party of militia only, an attempt to surprise it seemed by no means unjustifiable. It is true that between Fort Edward and Bennington, the means of communication were exceedingly defective. One prodigious forest, bottomed in swamps and morasses, covered the whole face of the country; through which, no body of men, unless familiarly accustomed to such expeditions, could hope to make their way, at all events with celerity. But the necessities of the army were pressing; the state of the campaign was a critical one; and the risk, though doubtless great, was considered by no means to outweigh the advantages to be derived from success. General Burgoyne determined to incur it; and a few hours sufficed for the final arrangement of his plan, and drawing up of his instructions.

There were attached to our little army, two hundred German dragoons; men of tried valour and enterprise, but destitute of horses. These the General selected as part of the force to be employed in the surprise of Ben-

nington; not only because he entertained the most perfect confidence in their steadiness, but because he conceived that in the country into which they were about to penetrate, they might be able to pick up a sufficient number of horses for their own use. In addition to these, the Canadian Rangers, a detachment of Provincials, about one hundred Indians, and Captain Fraser's Marksmen, with two pieces of light cannon, were allotted to this service; and the whole, amounting to five hundred men, were placed under the orders of Lieutenant-colonel Baume. The latter officer received special instructions to proceed with extreme caution. He was particularly enjoined to keep his dragoons together, and to feel his way, foot by foot, with his light troops alone; and whilst it was broadly insinuated that he might look for recruits among the well-disposed inhabitants, the greatest care was taken to impress him with the conviction, that they were not to be implicitly trusted. It would have been well both for himself and his followers, had these advices been somewhat more carefully remembered. But there

was a fatality attending all our measures, which soon began to develope itself; and perhaps the fate of the present expedition ought to have been taken as a fair warning of the destiny which awaited the army at large.

CHAPTER IV.

THOUGH all these arrangements were completed, and the troops destined to fulfil them told off so early as the beginning of August, the middle of the month was approaching ere this attempt, on the success of which so much was supposed to depend, was made. Perhaps there was no great error here, more especially as the column broke up from its bivouac, and advanced to the point where the Hudson's was to be crossed. It was a toilsome and a tedious march — a little, and but a little enlivened, by a harmless skirmish, which some straggling Rebels chose to maintain with our detached Indians. But I need not describe minutely a progress through dreary woods, and still more dreary morasses,

by far the greater portion of which proved impassable, except over bridges—where every object that met the eye was gloomy and disspiriting, and even the prospect of falling in with the enemy was denied us. Let it suffice to state, that, after enduring great privations with a spirit which failed not to the last, our army at length reached its destined resting-place, and took up a position on the eastern bank of the Hudson's, immediately opposite to the heights of Saratoga.

This done, and the enemy having withdrawn as far as Still Water, the General proceeded to carry into execution his projected design against Bennington. At an early hour in the morning of the 12th, our little band, unincumbered with any quantity of baggage besides that which each man could conveniently carry upon his back, set out in the direction of Batten Kill, where it arrived, without meeting with any adventure, by four o'clock in the afternoon. Here we halted for the night, by which means a company of fifty chasseurs overtook us, whom General Burgoyne, distrustful of our strength, sent to reinforce us; but at five next morning,

we were again in motion, and pushed cautiously, though with a quick pace, in the direction of Cambridge. Our journey this day proved in many respects more interesting than any which we had performed since the pursuit from Ticonderoga. The country, as we advanced, exhibited greater signs of cultivation, a field or two interposing here and there amidst the savannahs, and a few detached cottages lying by the way-side; whilst several of the country people voluntarily joined us, and took the oath of allegiance to the King. From them we learned that a company of Rebels had been left in Cambridge as a guard over some cattle which were on their way to Bennington; and as it was deemed of importance to seize such, wherever they could be found, our scouts were commanded to quicken their pace, and surprise them.

I was not one of the party thus sent forward, that duty having been entrusted to thirty Provincials and fifty Indians; but the latter attained their object after a trifling skirmish, in which one man only was wounded. Nothing could be finer than the effect produced by the

desultory firing which was kept up on that occasion by the retreating enemy and our pursuers. It so happened that the point where they first met, though covered with a deep and extensive forest, was not incumbered by brushwood or other deafening substances; and hence each report, as it rolled from tree to tree and glade to glade, sounded as if not one, but fifty muskets had been fired. You will easily believe that the first discharge caused us to quicken our pace, and to recover our ranks, which had begun to straggle; but no opportunity was afforded us of joining. The enemy fought only to escape; and hence, when we reached Cambridge, we found it in full occupation of our advance, which had made prizes of no inconsiderable quantity of carts and waggons, as well as of cattle and horses.

The satisfaction arising from this first success was not, however, so great as to render us indifferent to the nature of the intelligence which met us there. Instead of four or five hundred men, it was accurately ascertained that not fewer than eighteen hundred were in Benning-

ton; and though some appeared to be of opinion that they would not wait to receive us, there were others who scrupled not to foretell a widely different result. Now, in spite of our late reinforcement, our whole strength fell considerably short of six hundred men; and of these a full hundred were Indians, on whom no great reliance could be placed. Still, Colonel Baume appeared to consider his situation secure. He spoke, as far as we could understand him, in very contemptuous terms of the Rebels, and busily employed himself in receiving the submission of the inhabitants, who in great numbers flocked to his standard. Unfortunately, Colonel Baume forgot the cautions which had been so strongly impressed upon him. He considered all persons sincere who professed attachment to the Royal cause; alluding in their presence, and without reserve, both to his own numbers and designs; and as by far the greater proportion were in reality traitors, every circumstance connected with our dispositions and plans became as well known to the enemy as to ourselves.

It was our leader's intention to march at once

upon Bennington; for which purpose his little corps was under arms and in column, long before sunrise on the 14th. For some time our progress was, as it had hitherto been, unimpeded; but as we approached the northern branch of the Hossac, by the farm and bridge of Sankoick, the arrangements of the enemy began gradually to develope themselves.

A flying party of Rebels were discovered in front of the farm, which, on the approach of our people, spread themselves along the underwood; and they were not dislodged till after a good deal of firing, which caused us some loss in several of the most forward among the savages. At last, however, they retreated, abandoning a mill which they had previously fortified, and breaking down the bridge; and long before the latter could be repaired, they were safe from farther molestation. There was a good deal to excite apprehension even in this unimportant rencontre. The Rebels, though they gave way at last, fought, like men conscious of their own prowess, and confident in the strength of the support which was behind them; and this, coupled with the rumours

which had reached us relative to the amount of the garrison of Bennington, failed not to startle both Colonel Baume and the boldest of his troops. Besides, much time was lost by the destruction of the bridge. It required a full hour so far to repair it as to enable the guns and horses to pass; and when this was done, the day had declined so far as to render any attempt to reach the point of our destination before sunset fruitless. We accordingly bivouacked at the farm of Walmscott, about four miles from Sankoick, and three from Bennington; where the night was spent, if not in a sense of absolute security, at all events without the occurrence of any accident capable of exciting alarm.

The morning of the 15th came in with heavy rains, and a perfect hurricane of wind; consequently the little column, instead of pressing forward, was fain to keep under shelter of the farm buildings. But it was not permitted to remain long in a situation so comfortable. Our early parade had just been dismissed, when a few shots in the direction of the advanced sentries gave notice that the Rebels, instead of waiting to be attacked, were on the move; and

in a few minutes afterwards a general commotion at the outposts, indicated more by the shouts of the Indians than the report of their arms, warned us to make ready for an immediate attack. Colonel Baume lost no time in preparing to meet it. Forming his dismounted dragoons in close column among the homestead, he directed the Provincials, supported by Fraser's Marksmen, to advance to the assistance of the pickets, with orders to dispute every inch of ground to the utmost, and finally to retire upon the reserve, should all their efforts to maintain themselves prove ineffectual.

In an instant we were in motion, and a few minutes sufficed to bring us to the scene of action. We found our Indians threatened, rather than seriously assailed, by a considerable body of Militia-men, before whom they were falling back, leisurely and in order; but such was the violence of the storm, that not one out of a dozen muskets would explode, and hence the skirmish was neither very animated nor very bloody. On seeing us, our savage allies uttered a yell, which seemed to strike panic into the bosoms of their assailants: for the

latter instantly paused, hung back as it were irresolute, and finally retired. We followed for a time, briskly and impetuously; but we likewise felt the bad effects of the weather too much to seek a general engagement; and as the movements of the enemy seemed to indicate a wish on their parts to draw us on, we were of course extremely shy in trusting ourselves beyond our own limits. We accordingly halted as soon as we had recovered the ground which the savages had lost, and, lying down behind the trees, contented ourselves with watching the result during many hours, and striving as well as we could, to keep the priming of our rifles from the rain.

Whether the Americans ever entertained any serious intention of attacking this day, I cannot pretend to determine; but if they did, the state of the weather compelled them to relinquish it. Yet they ventured, from time to time, in considerable numbers, as if resolved to try how far our position was tenable; and on each occasion a little firing took place; but no impression was made upon us, and the rain continuing to fall without intermission, they at last desisted from their

efforts, and withdrew. Their proceedings were not, however, of a nature to be disregarded, or held in contempt, by a force so insignificant as ours. Colonel Baume immediately despatched a messenger to the rear, for the purpose of bringing up an additional corps which General Burgoyne had stationed at Batten Kill to support us; whilst he set sedulously to the task of fortifying a position in which he might await the coming up of supplies, of which he began now to be conscious that he stood in need.

The farm of Walmscott lies upon both banks of the Hossac, and consisted at this time of some six or eight log-built huts, scattered here and there over the narrow expanse of cultivated ground. To the left was a height, which Colonel Baume hastened to occupy: he posted here the dragoons with a portion of the Marksmen on their right, in rear of a little zigzag breastwork, composed of logs and loose earth. Such of the detached houses as came within the compass of his position, he filled with Canadians, supporting them with detachments of chasseurs and grenadiers, likewise entrenched behind breastworks; and he kept the whole, with the excep-

tion of about a hundred men, on the north side of the stream, holding the woods upon his flanks, in his front and rear, by the Indians.

To complete these arrangements, and throw up the few works which were to render them efficient, occupied the entire day, and some portion of the night of the 15th ; and seldom have men undergone hardships more severe than our people endured whilst thus employed. Let it be borne in mind, that the 15th was a day of continued rain ; not such rain as we are accustomed to witness in this country, but an absolute torrent, to afford shelter against which human ingenuity has yet devised no covering. Under this, the men toiled on, the earth which they threw up, being repeatedly washed down again, and the holes and ditches which they dug out, filled in a moment, and so rendered worse than useless. But their patience equalled the difficulties, which it was called upon to surmount. Each man felt, too, that he was labouring for his own personal safety, not less than for the benefit of the whole ; and all were, in consequence, inspired with a principle of perfect heroism and self-devotion. Poor fellows!

their spirit and perseverance were, on the present occasion, of little avail. They sufficed, indeed, to save their possessors from dishonour, and enabled them to sell their lives dearly; but they were quite inadequate to secure victory, or even to ward off defeat.

As soon as darkness fairly set in, our corps which had hitherto kept its station on the opposite side of the stream, was silently withdrawn, and took ground beside Reidesdel's dragoons on the little hill above alluded to. There we passed the night, not very comfortably, as may be well supposed, seeing that no fires were lighted, and that we were all impressed with a powerful sense of impending danger; but if there was an absence of mirth from amongst us, there was no approximation to terror; for we held our own valour at the highest, and rated that of our opponents somewhat too cheaply. Yet there were few amongst us that slept very soundly. We could not but remember that we were cut off, by a wide tract of desolate country, from all communication with our friends, and exposed to attacks on every side from a numerous enemy; and the

whoop which the savages raised from time to time, as well as an occasional musket-shot, gave notice, that even now that enemy was not inactive. Our anxiety for the return of day was greater by far than perhaps any of us would have been willing to acknowledge, even to his dearest friend; and the feeling of satisfaction was general, when the gradual reddening of the eastern sky denoted that it was fast approaching.

The morning of the 16th rose beautifully serene. The storm of the preceding day having expended itself, not a cloud was left to darken the face of the heavens; whilst the very leaves hung motionless, and the long grass waved not, under the influence of a perfect calm. Every object around, too, appeared to peculiar advantage; for the fields looked green and refreshed, the river was swollen and tumultuous, and the branches were all loaded with dew-drops, which glittered in the sun's early rays like so many diamonds. Nor would it be easy to imagine any scene more rife with peaceful and even pastoral beauty. Looking down from the summit of the rising ground,

I beheld immediately beneath me a wide sweep of stately forest, interrupted at remote intervals by green meadows or yellow corn-fields; whilst here and there a cottage, a shed, or some other primitive edifice, reared its modest head, as if for the purpose of reminding the spectator, that man had begun his inroads upon Nature, without as yet taking away from her simplicity and grandeur. I hardly recollect a scene which struck me at the moment more forcibly, or which has left a deeper, or more lasting impression on my memory.

I have said that the morning of the 16th rose beautifully serene; and it is not to the operations of the elements alone, that my expression applies. All was perfectly quiet at the outposts, not an enemy having been seen, nor an alarming sound heard, for several hours previous to sunrise. So peaceable, indeed, was the aspect which matters bore, that our leaders felt warmly disposed to resume the offensive, without waiting the arrival of the additional corps for which they had applied; and orders were already issued for the men to eat their breakfasts, preparatory to more active opera-

tions. But the arms were scarcely piled, and the havresacks unslung, when symptoms of a state of affairs different from that which had been anticipated, began to show themselves, and our people were recalled to their ranks in all haste, almost as soon as they had quitted them. From more than one quarter scouts came in to report, that columns of armed men were approaching; though whether with a friendly or hostile intention, neither their appearance nor actions enabled our informants to ascertain.

It has been stated, that during the last day's march our little corps was joined by many of the country people; most of whom demanded and obtained arms, as persons friendly to the Royal cause. How Colonel Baume became so completely duped as to place reliance on these men, I know not, but having listened with complacency to their previous assurances, that in Bennington a large majority of the populace were our friends, he was somehow or other persuaded to believe, that the armed bands of whose approach he was warned, were loyalists on their way to make a tender of their services to the leader of the King's troops.

Filled with this idea, he despatched positive orders to the outposts, that no molestation should be offered to the advancing columns; but that the pickets retiring before them should join the main body, where every disposition was made to receive either friend or foe. Unfortunately for us, these orders were but too faithfully obeyed. About half past nine o'clock I, who was not in the secret, beheld, to my utter amazement, our advanced parties withdraw without firing a shot, from thickets which might have been maintained for hours against any superiority of numbers; and the same thickets quickly occupied by men, whose whole demeanour, as well as their dress and style of equipment, plainly and incontestably pointed them out as Rebels.

I cannot pretend to describe the state of excitation and alarm into which our little band was now thrown. With the solitary exception of our leader, there was not a man amongst us who appeared otherwise than satisfied that those to whom he had listened were traitors; and that unless some prompt and vigorous measures were adopted, their treachery would be crowned with

its full reward. Captain Fraser, in particular, seemed strongly imbued with the conviction that we were wilfully deceived. He pointed out in plain language the extreme improbability of the story which these deserters had told, and warmly urged our chief to withdraw his confidence from them; but all his arguments proved fruitless. Colonel Baume remained convinced of their fidelity. He saw no reason to doubt that the people whose approach excited so much apprehension were the same of whose arrival he had been forewarned; and he was prevented from placing himself entirely in their power, only by the positive refusal of his followers to obey orders given to that effect, and the rash impetuosity of the enemy.

We might have stood about half an hour under arms, watching the proceedings of a column of four or five hundred men, who, after dislodging the pickets, had halted just at the edge of the open country, when a sudden trampling of feet in the forest on our right, followed by the report of several muskets, attracted our attention. A patrol was instantly sent in the direction of the sound; but before the party

composing it had proceeded many yards from the lines, a loud shout, followed by a rapid, though straggling fire of musketry, warned us to prepare for a meeting the reverse of friendly. Instantly the Indians came pouring in, carrying dismay and confusion in their countenance and gestures. We were surrounded on all sides; columns were advancing everywhere against us, and those whom we had hitherto treated as friends had only waited till the arrival of their support might justify them in advancing. There was no falsehood in these reports, though made by men who spoke rather from their fears than their knowledge. The column in our front no sooner heard the shout than they replied cordially and loudly to it; then, firing a volley with deliberate and murderous aim, rushed furiously towards us. Now then, at length, our leader's dreams of security were dispelled. He found himself attacked in front and flank by thrice his numbers, who pressed forward with the confidence which our late proceedings were calculated to produce; whilst the very persons in whom he had trusted, and to whom he had given arms, lost no time in turning them against him. These miscreants no

sooner heard their comrades cry, than they deliberately discharged their muskets among Reidesdel's dragoons; and dispersing before any steps could be taken to seize them, escaped, with the exception of one or two, to their friends.

If Colonel Baume had permitted himself to be duped into a great error, it is no more than justice to confess, that he exerted himself manfully to remedy the evil, and avert its consequences. Our little band, which had hitherto remained in column, was instantly ordered to extend, and the troops lining the breast work replied to the fire of the Rebels with extreme celerity and considerable effect. So close and destructive, indeed, was our first volley, that the assailants recoiled before it, and would have retreated, in all probability, within the wood; but ere we could take advantage of the confusion produced, fresh attacks developed themselves, and we were warmly engaged, one very side and from all quarters. It became evident that each of our detached posts was about to be assailed at the same instant. Not one of our dispositions had been concealed from the enemy, who, on the contrary, seemed to be

aware of the exact number of men stationed at each point; and they were one and all threatened by a force perfectiy adequate to bear down opposition, and yet by no means disproportionably large, or such as to render the main body inefficient. All, moreover, was done with the sagacity and coolness of veterans, who perfectly understood the nature of the resistance to be expected, and the difficulties to be overcome, and who, having well considered and matured their plans, were resolved to carry them into execution at all hazards, and at every expense of life.

It was at this moment, when the heads of columns began to show themselves in rear of our right and left, that the Indians, who had hitherto acted with spirit, and something like order, lost all confidence, and fled. Alarmed at the prospect of having their retreat cut off, they stole away, after their own fashion, in single files, in spite of the strenuous remonstrances of Baume, and of their own officers, leaving us more than ever exposed, by the abandonment of that angle of the intrenchments which they had been appointed to

maintain. But even this spectacle, distressing as it doubtless was, failed in affecting our people with a feeling at all akin to despair. The vacancy which the retreat of the savages occasioned, was promptly filled up by one of our two field-pieces, whilst the other poured destruction among the enemy in front, as often as they showed themselves in the open country, or threatened to advance.

In this state things continued upwards of three quarters of an hour. Though repeatedly assailed in front, flanks and rear, we maintained ourselves with so much obstinacy, as to inspire a hope that the enemy might even yet be kept at bay till the arrival of Breyman's corps, now momentarily expected; when an accident occurred, which at once put an end to this expectation, and exposed us, almost defenceless, to our fate. The solitary tumbril which contained the whole of our spare ammunition, became ignited, and blew up with a violence, which shook the very ground under our feet, and caused a momentary cessation in firing, both on our side and that of the enemy. But the cessation was only for a moment. The

American officers, guessing the extent of our calamity, cheered their men on to fresh exertions. They rushed up the ascent with redoubled ardour, in spite of the heavy volley which we poured in to check them; and finding our guns silent, they sprang over the parapet, and dashed within our works. For a few seconds the scene which ensued, defies all power of language to describe. The bayonet, the butt of the rifle, the sabre, the pike, were in full play; and men fell, as they rarely fall in modern war, under the direct blows of their enemies. But such a struggle could not in the nature of things be of long continuance. Outnumbered, broken, and somewhat disheartened by late events, our people wavered, and fell back, or fought singly and unconnectedly, till they were either cut down at their posts obstinately defending themselves, or compelled to surrender. Of Reidesdel's dismounted dragoons, few survived to tell how nobly they had behaved; Colonel Baume, shot through the body by a rifle-ball, fell mortally wounded; and all order and discipline being lost, flight, or submission, was alone thought of. For my own part, whether the feeling arose from desperation

or accident I cannot tell, but I resolved not to be taken. As yet I had escaped almost unhurt, a slight flesh wound in the left arm having alone fallen to my share; and gathering round me about thirty of my comrades, we made a rush where the enemy's ranks appeared weakest, and burst through. This done, each man made haste to shift for himself, without pausing to consider the fate of his neighbour; and losing one third of our number from the enemy's fire, the remainder took refuge, in groups of two or three, within the forest.

CHAPTER V.

It were no easy matter to describe the sensations which take possession of a man who has just escaped from a field of carnage and defeat, and finds himself all at once a fugitive and a wanderer in a country everywhere hostile to him. Though oppressed, and ready to drop to the earth through thirst and fatigue, I could not pause even to look behind, whilst as yet the shouts of the victors and the tumult of the strife rang in my ears; nor was it till an alarming sense of giddiness warned me to proceed no farther, that I at last ventured to cast myself at length under a spreading oak. The giddiness in question, I was not long in discovering, arose from loss of blood. Whilst running down the slope, a ball had passed through my thigh, of

which at the moment I was not aware; but several of the smaller arteries having been cut, it bled profusely, and now occasioned so much weakness, that it was with difficulty I succeeded in preserving my consciousness. Happily for me, a stream of pure water flowed from a mossy fountain near, of which I drank the sweetest and most luxurious draught that ever passed my lips; and being refreshed and invigorated by it, I so far recovered self-command, as to look, as well as I could, to the state of my hurt. I wrapped my handkerchief tightly round it, so as to stanch the bleeding, and lay down again, with the design, if possible, of courting sleep.

I have said that it would be no easy matter to describe the sensations which obtain the mastery over a man who has just escaped from a field of carnage and defeat; and nowhere could a proof more striking of the justice of this remark be found, than I myself exhibited on that unfortunate day. Though I would have given worlds for one hour of undisturbed slumber, and though the bodily machine felt as if its vigour had departed for ever, sleep refused to come upon me. If I closed my eyes for a

moment, it was merely to fall into a feverish doze, during which images the most hideous and alarming crowded my imagination, and from which the slightest waving of the rushes, or the rustling of the long grass, sufficed to rouse me. I started at the sound of my own breathing; and without knowing what it was that I feared, I found myself the slave of the most hideous terror. Nor was it over my mind alone that this nervous irritability exerted its influence. I have often travelled, and travelled on foot too, whilst suffering under wounds more dangerous and troublesome than those which then disabled me; but on that day my limbs refused to do their office, or to carry me one step beyond the spot where I first halted. I accordingly lay for two whole hours in a condition as deplorable as has frequently been filled by a human being: cut off from all hope or chance of receiving support or assistance from my friends, and anticipating nothing else than either to perish from want, or to fall a sacrifice to some wandering party of hostile savages.

I was thus situated, having dropped into a sort of trance, such as forms the connecting

link between sleep and waking, when a sound which had hitherto smote upon the ear of fancy alone, suddenly arose, and burst in a moment the spell which bound me. It was a roar of musketry, with an occasional boom of cannon, echoed back in tremendous tumult by the surrounding forests; and I was not slow in conjecturing that it arose from Colonel Breyman's party engaged with the same force by which we had just been overthrown. It will readily be imagined that I listened to the awful sound with an intensity of interest such as hardly any other in nature could have produced, and that my hopes and fears obtained by turns the mastery, in proportion as it appeared to approach or recede from the spot where I lay. Now it seemed to draw rapidly towards me, now it swept away in the opposite direction; now I judged that the Rebels were falling back, now that the King's troops were retreating,—so wavering and uncertain a guide is the ear, unassisted by the operation of other senses. By degrees, however, matters assumed a more decided character. The firing, which for a time had extended over a considerable space, gradually

narrowed, as if the skirmishers were called in, and lines were formed for a charge; and then a shout, of which I well knew the import, rang through the air. It was followed by a momentary silence, more awful by far than the tumult which ushered it in; and then succeeded a tiraillade so warm and so confused, as plainly to indicate that one side or other had given way. It was no longer, now, the steady discharges of hostile armies, each in firm array, and eager for victory; but the desultory firing of detached parties, some in flight, others in hot pursuit. I could bear this state of suspense no longer; so, mustering all my resolution, I struggled to rise, and after several ineffectual attempts, succeeded.

The sun had set, and twilight was closing in fast, when I began my tedious and painful journey towards the open country. My limb, swollen and stiff, refused at first to support the weight of my body; and my whole frame, enfeebled by inanition, no less than by loss of blood, with difficulty obeyed the motions of a mind, to which something like its natural tone was restored. I reeled like a drunken man,

and felt as if at every step I should have fallen again. But a strong sense of the necessity for exertion kept me up, and as long as the faintest light remained, and the firing continued to direct me, I pushed on. At last, however, the firing ceased entirely, and darkness the deepest and most profound covered the whole face of the sky. Now, then, I gave myself up absolutely to despair, and casting myself once more upon the ground, I shut my eyes, and resigned myself, without a groan, to my fate.

How long I remained in this plight I cannot tell, for either sleep, or, which is more probable, a fainting-fit soon overpowered me; but when I recovered my senses, I found myself in the midst of a group of armed men, one of whom was kindly supporting my head upon his knee. A large fire was blazing near, the light of which fell strongly upon my companions; but so confused were my senses, and so vague and unsatisfactory the workings of memory itself, that I could not tell for many minutes whether I was in the hands of friends or foes. Nay, my situation was to me altogether inexplicable. I recollected something, indeed, of the events of the

morning, as that we had sustained a severe action, and that I had myself been alone in the woods; but how I came there, whether we had been defeated or victorious, and above all, why I should be as I now was, were mysteries which all my exertions failed to solve. By degrees, however, reason resumed her influence. I raised my head, and gazing around began to receive some faint impression that the faces before me were familiar, when a well-known voice restored me at once to myself, and I found that I was really among friends. The voice was that of my brave leader, on whom I was leaning; and to my inexpressible delight I now saw, that the group was composed entirely of old comrades—the members of my own corps, Fraser's Marksmen.

As soon as the first gush of joy had subsided, I eagerly inquired of Fraser by what means he had escaped from the carnage of yesterday, and how fortune had so ordered it as to bring him to my relief. The first portion of his story resembled my own in almost every particular; the last contained details but little calculated to raise the spirits of one already humbled by

defeat, and debilitated by bodily suffering. Like me, he had cut his way through the circle of Americans, but, instead of plunging into the heart of the forest, he contented himself with such shelter as the banks of the river afforded, with the intention of escaping by the main road, as soon as darkness should set in. He was thus situated when Colonel Breyman's detachment arrived at the very ground where ours had sustained its defeat. To this he hastened to attach himself; but before he found an opportunity of making its leader aware of the events which had just occurred, it too was furiously attacked by General Starke. A sanguinary affair ensued, in which, for a time, our people appeared to have the advantage; but their ammunition beginning to fail, they were compelled to slacken their fire, and put all upon the hazard of a single charge. The charge was indeed successful,—that is to say, the enemy fled before it, and the field was for a moment won,—but it was only for a moment; for Starke, rallying his people, threw them in small bands round Breyman's flanks, and soon broke, by an incessant fire, ranks which could no longer

be maintained except by the bayonet. Finally, the Hessians retreated in disorder, leaving their guns, and many prisoners, in the hands of the victors; and were saved from absolute destruction only by the approach of night.

It was whilst escaping the second time from a contest so disastrous, that chance directed Fraser to the spot where I lay. I had taken, it appeared, the exact route which, had I pursued it a little farther, must have brought me to the left of Breyman's line; and when all means of guiding my steps failed, I lay down, happily for myself, upon the very track which most of the fugitives from the battle were compelled to follow. Being discovered here and recognized by my relative, I was conveyed at his request to the spot which we now occupied; where my hurts were carefully dressed, and every attention was shown to me by men, in whom personal suffering had not yet produced its ordinary effect, of rendering them callous to the miseries of others.

I would willingly pass over that portion of my history which refers to our painful progress back from the Hossac to the Hudson's.

Were I, indeed, to enter into a detail of it, my descriptions would be only of sufferings the most acute, arising partly from the absence of common nutriment, and partly from a consciousness of individual degradation, of which none among us could divest ourselves. Of the remains of Breyman's corps, be it observed, we lost sight entirely. It fell back, I believe, in tolerable order by the main road, and not being pursued, regained the banks of the Hudson's in safety; but the party to which I found myself attached, had separated from the main body, and of course knew nothing of its fate from the moment when the separation took place. We accordingly kept the woods during three entire days, deriving our subsistence chiefly from wild fruits, and the few crumbs which remained in our havresacks: and our progress was the more tardy, because I could not move without assistance, and my comrades refused to abandon me. But we gained the camp at last, though in a plight which bore ample testimony to the privations which we had endured; and I became for some time the inhabitant of that most melancholy of all abodes, a military hospital.

My wounds, though originally slight, had become, from neglect and the hardships which I had been condemned to undergo, so inflamed, that several days elapsed ere I was able to pay attention to any circumstance not immediately connected with my own feelings. I lay all this while upon a wretched pallet, in the same room with twelve unfortunate creatures, of whom seven died delirious and raving. So acute were my own agonies, and so overwhelming their influence over me, that I could not experience so much as pity for any one except myself. If my miserable comrades groaned or complained, I answered only with a curse, because they disturbed my meditations or interrupted my repose; so perfectly selfish do men become when their miseries pass a certain point, or exceed their powers of endurance. Yet let me do justice to myself. It was only whilst matters were at the worst with me, that feelings so unworthy obtained an ascendency, which they gradually but surely lost, as my own case obtained amelioration. The paroxysm was no sooner over, than my past unkindness affected me with deep shame; and I thenceforth exerted

myself to the utmost, in order to make amends for it. Nor were my exertions useless. The poor fellows about me had themselves suffered too much not to experience something of the same selfishness to which I gave way, and they readily and kindly accepted the apologies which I offered for having displayed it so rudely.

In this manner nearly a fortnight was passed; during which time the army remained stationary: its energies being chiefly devoted to the bringing up of stores from the rear, and the construction of rafts with which to pass the river. Whilst our own people were thus employed, the Indians, spreading themselves over the face of the country, brought havock and dismay into all districts, and perpetrated enormities at the recollection of which the mind even at this distance of time shudders. Irritated by the trifling progress which had been made, and indignant at the check imposed upon plunder, these savages put to death every man, woman, or child, that fell into their hands; insomuch that General Burgoyne was driven to the necessity of threatening their very chiefs with punishment, in the event of their

failing to restrain the cruelties of their followers. But his threats and entreaties were alike disregarded, enormity after enormity occurring, till at last a deed was perpetrated which will for ever leave an indelible stain upon the honour of the British arms. The deed to which I now allude, was the cold-blooded murder of an innocent girl, the child of a loyal father, and the betrothed of a brave youth who bore a commission in the King's service.

About ten miles from the site of our present encampment, and something more from the post of Fort Edward, stood a neat cottage, the residence of an aged and loyal emigrant, by name Macrea. He had served as officer in one of the Highland regiments, in former wars against the French; and having been rewarded at the peace by a grant of land, he beat his sword into a ploughshare, and sat down to cultivate his farm, and train up his children in principles of loyalty and honour. For a time all things went well with him: his labours were crowned with success; under his own exertions and those of his sons, the barren wilderness became a smiling garden, and the old man considered himself, as

he was considered by his neighbours, one of the most prosperous individuals in the settlement. To complete his good fortune, a fine young man, the son of an old comrade, and now a fellow settler, made proposals for the hand of his daughter; and being equally acceptable to the maid as to her father, he was duly received in the character of an accepted lover.

Things were in this state, and the wedding-day was understood to be approaching, when the breaking out of the rebellion, with the subsequent operations against Canada, dissipated for a time all thoughts of domestic arrangements. Macrea espoused the cause of his Sovereign warmly; and his sons, as well as his proposed son-in-law, took up arms in the Royal service. Of the former, one fell in the affair of Fort St. John, the other during the assault at Quebec; and Macrea became, in consequence, dependent wholly upon his daughter, for that support which his increasing infirmities demanded. Yet the old man bore his misfortunes like a hero. His sons, he said, had died as he wished them to die, in the service of a

kind and gracious monarch; and his daughter being still left to be the light of his dim eyes, it would ill become him to raise his voice against Providence. Besides, his future son-in-law, whom he loved not less tenderly than his own boys, survived; and in the prospect of beholding a union, on the completion of which he had set his heart, he found many sources of comfort under his present calamities.

Strange to say, Macrea, though well known as a partisan of the Government, suffered neither insult nor molestation from the Rebel colonists near him. Allowances seem to have been made for the prejudices of an old soldier; and though he never disguised his wishes as to the final results of the war, he continued on the best terms with men, whose principles and feelings all led to an opposite line of conduct. The consequence was, that when Burgoyne's invasion began, though most of his neighbours abandoned their houses, and sought shelter at a distance from our line of march, no one dreamed of offering insult or injury to him, because he adopted a different course

of conduct; and he remained with his daughter to welcome the coming of men, whom his principles taught him to regard as deliverers.

Macrea's farm lay somewhat out of the track of either of our columns in the pursuit from Ticonderoga; consequently it escaped a visit, which, if paid in the first moment of angry triumph, might have been far from agreeable. Probably it would have passed unscathed altogether, had our progress been more rapid, or our future successes more brilliant; but the ill-judged halt opposite to Saratoga afforded an opportunity to marauders, of which they failed not to take advantage, and by which the old colonist became a severe sufferer.

A party of Indians stealing from the lines, made their way to his house. They burst upon him during the night, driving the old man into the woods for safety, and wantonly destroying such of his effects as they possessed not the means to remove; and above all, they seized his daughter, of whom, in the confusion, Macrea had for a moment lost sight. Had matters ended here, all might have yet been well; Macrea was not a man to resent even this injury, knowing, as he

well knew, the nature of those who inflicted it; whilst Government would have doubtless made compensation for any loss which the inroad might have caused. But the barbarians into whose hands the maiden fell, quarrelled among themselves respecting their right to the captive; and one more inhuman than the rest, clove her skull with his tomahawk.

When intelligence of this horrid murder reached the camp, the indignation of all, from the General down to the meanest sentinel, was roused to the utmost pitch of fury. It so happened that the girl's betrothed was amongst us, and of the state of his feelings I leave you to judge; yet was it necessary, situated as we were, to deal mercifully with the perpetrators of the black deed, to whom, from motives of policy, no public punishment was awarded. The cordiality, however, which had already begun to wax faint between us and our native warriors, was, by this last act of devilish treachery, destroyed. We regarded them now as little better than fiends, useless in the field, and worse than useless out of it; and if we turned not against them the arms which our legitimate enemy gave us

no opportunity to exercise, it was only because our chief took care to keep them entirely apart from us. But it is time that I return to my detail of military events, to which every successive day added a deeper and more awful interest.

We were yet writhing under the effects of the repulse at Bennington, when intelligence of the failure of Colonel St. Leger's attempts upon Fort Stanwix was communicated to us. Threatened by a force greatly superior to his own, and deserted and betrayed by his Indian allies, that officer was reluctantly compelled to relinquish several important advantages which he had obtained; and he was now in full retreat across the country, with the intention, if possible, of effecting his escape upon Montreal. I need not observe that such a communication, received at such a moment, excited no little alarm among all to whom it was communicated. If the enemy were in sufficient force to detach largely from our immediate front, at a moment when an attack might daily be anticipated, what probability was there that they would be unable to oppose as successfully, our forcing one of the many admirable positions with which the coun-

try around Albany abounded? and should we fail in penetrating to that place before the winter set fairly in, our prospects would indeed be of the most gloomy nature. Nor was this the only consideration which thrust itself fearfully into view. Rumours, apparently not without foundation, were afloat, of detached corps hanging upon our communications. Fort Edward was already menaced; even Fort William had been threatened; nor was it safe to forward the smallest convoy of stores, except under the protection of a numerous and well-appointed guard. But, above all, our information proved to be, not only defective, but incorrect. Instead of a country everywhere friendly, we found ourselves in the heart of a district decidedly and bitterly hostile. Few recruits joined our standards, and of these few, many were not to be trusted; whilst the American General Greene was well known to receive daily reinforcements of Militia, gathered, as well from this, as from the more remote settlements. Then, again, desertions began to be with us matters of frequent occurrence. Of the two hundred and fifty Provincials which originally

formed part of our strength, scarcely one hundred remained; and of these, one or two usually went over to the enemy, every night. True, a reinforcement of some hundreds of Germans came in about this time, as well as drafts for several of the British battalions, and a few recruits for ourselves; but on the whole, the army was greatly diminished, and was daily diminishing in numbers, whilst its *morale* had undeniably undergone a change by no means for the better. Nor did the evil end even here. Our leader's proceedings began to form the subject of frequent, and not very favourable discussion, in all parts of the camp. Whilst some condemned the inconsiderate rashness which had carried us thus far from our supplies and entangled us in a desert country, others exclaimed loudly against the wavering and timid policy, which kept us so long inactive, at a moment when every consideration of common prudence required a prompt advance. Even our Generals themselves restrained not their tongues from giving utterance to such criticisms. General Philips, in particular, was loud in con-

demning the indecision by which all our operations were marked; and Fraser, though personally a friend of General Burgoyne, could hardly smother his impatience, or suppress similar complaints. Yet is it no more than just towards Burgoyne to observe, that he laboured at this juncture under disadvantages of no ordinary nature; and if his movements were less prompt than they might, and perhaps ought to have been, it is very possible that they were dictated by a sense of what was due, both to himself, and to the brave army of which he was in command.

General Burgoyne had as yet received no advices from New York, indicative of any intention on the part of Sir William Clinton to operate in his favour by an advance up the Hudson's. Now, this of itself was a grievous disappointment to one whose plans were all formed with a view to such co-operation, and who had anticipated, on setting out, that a junction of forces would take place, if not at Albany, certainly a few leagues below it. But from Albany we were now distant not more

than forty miles, whereas the corps which we had expected to meet there, was not yet, as far as we knew, in march from the intrenched camp, situated at thrice that distance from the point of rendezvous. Again, our means of transport, originally scanty, became every hour more and more inadequate to the demands of the army; for the horses knocked up from incessant labour, and all our efforts to recruit them failed,—whilst the necessity which existed of leaving strong garrisons at the posts in our rear, operated as a serious drain upon a force, from the first scarcely competent to the successful accomplishment of an enterprise so hazardous as that in which we were engaged. All these matters were doubtless felt in their full force by General Burgoyne, to whom a separate command was new; and if they produced a thousand doubts and misgivings, as to the proper measures which it behoved him to adopt, these emergencies were not different from what might have been expected. Still his doubts and misgivings were rendered but too manifest to the troops. They also began to entertain suspicions that

all things went not on aright: and the confidence which they had originally experienced, both in themselves and their leaders, suffered from that moment considerable diminution.

CHAPTER VI.

It was now the month of September, and my health being in a great measure restored, I was about to return to my duty, when I received a message one morning, through an orderly sergeant, indicating that the General desired to see me. I obeyed the summons without delay, and following my conductor, was led towards a sort of log hut, which the pioneers had erected about a quarter of a mile in rear of the regular encampment. It was here that our Commander-in-chief had fixed his head-quarters; several tents in which his staff and attendants lodged, being beside it, whilst about a stone's throw apart, was a tall marquee, inhabited, as I was given to understand, by the

lady of Baron Reidesdel, her children, and female servants.

On entering the hut, I beheld General Burgoyne seated beside a table, on which lay a multitude of maps and papers; and near him stood my friend and relation, Captain Fraser, with whom he seemed to be in earnest conversation. He turned his face towards me, and having ascertained from Fraser who I was, pointed to a stool, on which he desired that I would sit down.

"Young man," said he, "I have sent for you, because I have received from Captain Fraser the most favourable report of your gallantry and good conduct; and because I am desirous, at his recommendation, of employing you upon a service, which will entitle you to the highest rewards which it may be in my power to bestow. Are you willing to embark upon an enterprise of no ordinary hazard? Have you any reluctance to risk your life, in order to advance the fortunes of this army?"

To say that I heard this speech without emotion, would be to speak falsely. My heart leaped, as it were, to my throat; but if there

was something of apprehension in the feeling which at first caused this agitation, it soon gave way to a sense of honest pride, that I had been thus spoken of, and was thus favoured. I replied without hesitation, that I was both willing and ready to undertake any duty on which it should please the General to employ me; and that I would gladly, not only hazard, but lay down my life at once, to secure the smallest benefit either to the army or its leader.

"You have spoken bravely, Sir," replied the General smiling; "and that you may have at once a foretaste of the fortune that awaits you, provided your zeal and diligence be as I anticipate, permit me to present you with this commission. It confers temporary and local rank only, because to such only my authority extends; but you may rely upon having it confirmed, as soon as the despatch which I am now preparing to send off, shall reach the Horse-Guards. And now, Mr. Macdirk, you may retire. Captain Fraser will fully instruct you in the business which you are about to undertake, and you will, of course, consider all that is said to you, as spoken in the strictest confi-

dence. Till the fitting moment arrive, you will continue to do duty with your old leader, though you will be prepared to give me your personal attendance as often as I may require." So saying, the General rose and bowed; upon which Fraser put his arm within mine, and we quitted the hut.

It were utterly impossible for me to describe the state of mind into which the preceding scene threw me. I found myself of a sudden, and when I least expected it, advanced to the rank of a commissioned officer, and gladdened with the promise of future advancement from one who possessed every means of fulfilling it; so far all my thoughts were agreeable,—so agreeable indeed, as to border upon extravagance. But then there were conditions to be attended to, there was some service to be accomplished more than ordinarily hazardous, upon the happy accomplishment of which my prospects were made distinctly to depend. What could this be? I neither am, nor ever was a coward, yet let me confess the truth, though there was nothing for which I longed more earnestly than an explanation, I shrank with in-

stinctive dread from demanding it. I was afraid —fairly and positively afraid,—not to face death, for that I had faced often enough already to have acquired a sort of constitutional contempt for it; but I dreaded my own inability to support the brilliant character which it was very evident my friend Fraser had bestowed on me. It was my prudence and discretion, not my physical courage, that I doubted. Fraser read my agitation in my countenance, though I did my best to conceal it, and laughed at it. "Why, Macdirk!" said he, "I gave you credit for greater nerve than you seem to possess. What ails you, man? Are you not extremely fortunate in obtaining promotion thus early? and is it not honourable to you in the highest degree, that you should be deemed worthy of our General's confidence?" I could only answer these questions in the affirmative; "but," continued I, "who knows whether I be competent to fulfil the task which he has done me the honour to assign me? It may require greater experience and more intelligence than I possess; for you know I am as yet a young soldier, though certainly a very zealous one."

" Tut, tut!" replied he, " I will answer for your fitness. And now let us withdraw to some place apart, that I may explain to you the nature of the undertaking in which you are about to embark."

We walked on for some time, clearing the encampment, and passing the sentries, till we gained an open and elevated spot, where no intruder could break in upon us without timely warning being given of his approach. Here Fraser seated himself, and inviting me to do the same, he began a conversation, of which I need scarcely observe that it was to me a deeply interesting one.

" Macdirk," said he, " you are not so unskilful in the business of campaigning, as to be ignorant that this army has got itself into a devil of a scrape. Whether Burgoyne be to blame, or Howe or Clinton, or the Government at home, or all combined, is a matter of very little moment now; but that we are entangled in a net from which it will be no easy matter to extricate ourselves with honour, the rawest recruit amongst us must perceive. Don't you think, that to be the means of cutting this Gor-

dian knot, would of itself be satisfactory to any man?"

I nodded, rather than spoke, an assent; upon which he continued.

"The great question to be solved at present is, whether it be prudent to advance or retreat; for to remain where we are much longer, is to ensure our certain destruction. Now that is a matter which cannot be ascertained, unless some communication be opened with the troops in New York. How do you think this might be done?"

I answered with perfect truth, that I could offer no opinion upon such a subject, but that I supposed General Howe or Sir William Clinton would take care to inform us, as soon as they had matured their plans and were ready to act upon them. "They mature their plans!" answered he, with a smile of bitter scorn. "As to old Howe, the fellow never had head enough to form any plan, unless it were to entrap some silly wench, or pick some young fellow's pocket; and Clinton is eternally forming plans, upon which he never acts, and making schemes, for the happy execution of which he never finds a

fitting season. If we wait for information communicated spontaneously from them, we shall wait, I suspect, till doomsday. No, no, my friend, it is we that must open this communication; and you are the man to do so, or I greatly mistake you."

"I open this communication! In the name of common sense, how can I, ignorant as I am of the country, pretend to make my way through the heart of the Rebel army?"

Fraser was silent for some minutes, during which he looked steadily into my face, as if he would have read my inmost soul, and weighed my very feelings before they were roused. "Macdirk," said he at length, "these are not times when a man who loves his country must be very fastidious as to the means which he adopts to serve her. As I said before, we are in a desperate plight, and desperate measures only will save us. You must undertake this business, for I have pledged myself that you should; and though you put your neck in jeopardy by so doing, what matters it? If you be prudent, you may escape, and then a rapid promotion awaits you."

Another pause of some moments occurred, for my assurances that I would attempt any thing practicable can hardly be said to have broken it, when Fraser again resumed. "I presume you are possessed of too much good sense not to be aware, that the character of every action takes its tone, not from the opinions of others respecting it, but from the motive which dictates its performance. You are likewise too much of a soldier not to be convinced, that he who obeys his General only does his duty, let the order be of what nature or tendency it may."

To both of these propositions I readily assented. "Well, then," continued he, "suppose General Burgoyne were to require you or me to desert our colours,—not for the purpose of really acting as traitors, but to further some great end of his own,—do you not think that we should be justified in obeying him?" Even now I could not comprehend the object at which he was driving; so I replied vaguely and in general terms, that I did not believe any general would demand such a sacrifice from the meanest of his followers, and that it would be time enough to discuss the propriety of obedience or disobe-

dience, when an order so singular were issued. "Then, my good fellow," said he, speaking in a tone of great earnestness, and laying his hand upon my shoulder, "that moment has actually come. I will cut this matter short. Of the difficulties into which we have fallen I have already told you. We advance, it is true, on the morrow,—that is to say, we cross the river, and shall probably push forward at all hazards as far as Albany; but beyond that point we cannot move till the troops from New York be induced to lend us their assistance. How are they to be told of our perilous situation?—for if we be in jeopardy now, we shall be a thousand times more in danger when the Hudson's is between us and our communications. There is but one way of effecting this end. To attempt a passage through the enemy's lines unnoticed, would be to expose yourself to certain destruction. Five messengers have been already sent out, and all five have, as our spies inform us, suffered death. You must desert; you must pretend to pass over to the enemy, and then you must find your way as you best can, to the coast. No doubt you will have obstacles to overcome

both numerous and severe; but the thing must be done,—and you must do it."

I was so confounded at this declaration, that for some time after Fraser had ceased to speak, I sat absolutely at a loss for a reply. Had he proposed to me to make my way in disguise, though I should have felt that the service was a desperate one, I would have undertaken it, if not cheerfully, at all events without a murmur; but to adopt the method now pointed out was to put in jeopardy, not only my life, but my honour. As soon as I could so far command myself as to speak, I positively and flatly declined the trust. I expressed not only my disinclination to the arrangement, but the absolute impossibility of performing it with effect; for what excuse could I offer to the enemy for such a proceeding, should I be so fortunate as to reach their lines unhurt? and if I did reach them, where was the probability that I should be permitted to penetrate as far as New York? "No, no," continued I, "propose any thing to me except this, and I will accomplish it, or perish in the attempt; but if I must put my reputation in hazard, in order

to purchase advancement in a profession which requires in its members the nicest sense of honour, I will rather continue as I am, unknown and disregarded, for ever."

I spoke feelingly and warmly, and my tone was not without its effect upon Fraser; but he persisted in urging the task upon me. He pointed out, that of my reputation both General Burgoyne and himself would take charge; that, if I perished, ample justice would be done to my memory; whereas, if I succeeded, my renown would brighten in proportion to the temporary cloud that had been cast over it. Above all, he urged me to take into consideration the prodigious benefits which I might be the means of conferring upon an entire army. Though I could not but acknowledge that there was great justice in many of his arguments, they were not yet such as to convince me. I persisted in my refusal, at all events, whilst things continued as little desperate as they were, and begged him to urge me no more on a point on which my mind was quite made up. Fraser either was, or pretended to be, both hurt and offended by my manner. "And your commission," said he,

" for what purpose was that conferred upon you? Will you retain the reward without having striven to merit it?

" Captain Fraser," replied I haughtily, " the commission was conferred upon me,—at least, I accepted it,—not as a retaining fee for future services, but as a reward for the past; but since there appears to be a doubt on the subject, let it be solved at once. Here is the bit of paper, carry it back to the General, and tell him, that I would rather serve as a private volunteer, honourably and uprightly, than earn the dignity of field-marshal, by conduct such as my own conscience cannot approve." I held out the parchment whilst I spoke, my face glowing with a sense of insulted dignity; but Fraser pushed it aside, and throwing his arms about my neck, begged me to forget his hasty observation.

" Keep your commission, my dear boy," cried he; " you never appeared more worthy of it than now; for though I think your scruples ill-founded and even ridiculous, I cannot but respect the principle from which they spring. Let the tenor of our past conversation be kept

strictly to ourselves. Think over my proposal again, and perhaps the moment may arrive when you will discover, that a soldier never acts so nobly as when he risks, in his country's service, all that is most dear to him." So saying, he rose from the ground, and we strolled back to the camp, arm in arm, as we had quitted it, on the best terms, and in perfect good-humour.

You will readily believe that the proceedings of the evening were of such a nature as utterly to unfit me for entering upon any of those employments in which it was customary to spend our time during the season of inaction. The society of my comrades was distasteful to me,—I could not meet them as formerly; so I withdrew to my own wigwam, to indulge in a train of thought, in which it would be difficult to say whether the pleasant or the painful most predominated. On one hand I considered, that an opportunity was now presented of advancing my fortunes, such as might never offer again; and that if I neglected it, the time might, and probably would come, when I should bitterly lament my folly. On the other, the risk of perishing,

and perishing like a coward, with a reputation tarnished, and a name never to be pronounced without reproach,—these considerations operated powerfully with me, to adhere to the determination which I had already expressed, of absolutely refusing the part assigned to me. For it had been explicitly stated, that no step would be taken to preserve my memory from disgrace, till the fact of my having fallen a sacrifice should be ascertained. My own safety, indeed, required that neither the General nor Fraser should intrust me with any written document, from which, in case of untoward events occurring, a justification might be drawn; and to permit the circumstance of their connivance with my pretended crime to get abroad, would infallibly ruin the entire plot. Real deserters passed over to the enemy's lines every day; and should it be known in our camp that a spy had assumed that character, no great time would elapse ere the Americans would become equally aware of it. Besides, what probability existed, even allowing that I reached their army in safety, that I should be permitted to pass unobserved to the rear? and if I did, were there not numerous posts in the Highlands, through

which it would be necessary to make my way, in order to reach New York? The whole affair accordingly appeared in a light so little satisfactory, that though ambition pulled forcibly to one side, prudence, and what I was willing to dignify by the name of honour, pulled no less strongly to the other; and I found myself, after many hours' intense cogitation, as far from arriving at a final determination as when the proposal was first laid before me.

The same doubts and misgiving which had tormented me during the day, continued to torment me when it departed. I lay down, indeed, but it was not to sleep, for with sleep the fever under which I laboured was totally at variance. After tossing about, therefore, for some time, I fancied that the night air might refresh me, and, wrapping my cloak about me, I walked forth. It was one of those lovely autumnal nights, when the full harvest moon shines in all her brilliancy, and every plant and leaf glitters in the dew, which never falls so fast as after a day of burning sunshine. The sky was blue and cloudless, and there was a silence throughout the lines, deep and unbroken, like that which reigned in the camp of the

Assyrians, when the Angel of Death fought for Jerusalem. Even the sentinels, as if weary of promenading, stood still, and leaning upon the muzzles of their firelocks, looked up into the heavens, whilst the only sound distinguishable was the murmur of the river as it swept with a quiet rush over its rocky channel. Of the effect of such a scene upon spirits somewhat over-wrought, I need not speak. A calm fell upon me, similar in all respects to that which appeared to dwell upon the rest of Nature's works; and I strolled forward in the direction of the outposts, forgetful of every idea or sensation, except those which surrounding objects were calculated to excite.

It was not long before the bodily machine began to feel the influence of a mind reconciled to itself, and eased of troublesome speculations. A desire to sleep, which all my efforts to promote had failed in exciting, stole gradually but imperceptibly over me; and I returned soon after midnight to my tent, where a sound and refreshing slumber fell upon me.

CHAPTER VII.

At an early hour in the morning of the 13th, I was awoke by the entrance of an orderly, who came to inform me that the troops were getting under arms, and that the passage of the river was expected immediately to take place. Of the preparations for this step, which had for some time back been carried on, I was not ignorant. A flotilla of boats having been collected, and an adequate number of rafts constructed, our people had thrown a bridge across the Hudson's, a task to the completion of which no interruption was offered by the Americans; and now all things being in readiness, even to the bringing up of stores and provisions, it was determined to lose no time in turning the work in question to account. I was not surprised at

this information, because Fraser, in our conference of the preceding day, had led me to expect it; so I arose, dressed with all haste, and hurried off to assume my proper station with the Marksmen.

Nothing could be finer or more imposing, than the spectacle which this eventful morning produced. The army, though diminished in point of numbers, and somewhat shorn of its splendour by long and severe service, was still such as no military eye could behold without admiration; and as it defiled over the narrow bridge in column of sections, the regularity of its movements, and the steadiness of its well-ordered tread, failed not to excite, at least in me, much of my former enthusiasm. Nor was the scene without its effect upon others, as well as upon myself. The officers, generally, cleared away from their brows the clouds which had of late hung over them, and exhibited by their bearing, and cheerful countenances, that even yet they anticipated success; whilst the soldiers resumed in a moment that bold and careless demeanour, of which a prolonged inactivity, for which they cannot satisfactorily account, never

fails to deprive British troops. Even the Commander-in-chief, of whose disposition to despond ample proof had already been exhibited, sat in evident delight to watch the progress of an operation, touching the ultimate consequences of which he forbore to form a guess; and spoke and acted like one who had not yet resigned all hope of a fortunate issue. Fraser alone took, or appeared to take, no interest in passing events.

"You see, Macdirk," said he to me, "that the General still trusts to your zeal. I have not told him, nor will I tell him, that you reject his offers, and refuse to obey his wishes; but this much I do not hesitate to say to yourself, that on you now, more than on any other individual, must the safety of this army depend. By crossing the river we commit ourselves, beyond the hope of redemption; and we are utterly ruined, unless Clinton move to support us."

No opportunity was furnished of giving an answer to this speech, for the speaker passed on before I could utter a syllable, and I could only follow in a state of feeling, not very easily described, though certainly far from being so

agreeable as had but a few moments before possessed me.

To transport the army with its guns, stores, and ammunition, over the Hudson's, occupied the whole of the 13th and the greater part of the 14th of September. It is true that no very vigorous exertions were made to conduct the movement with greater alacrity; but as the weather chanced to be particularly favourable, and the enemy showed no disposition to interfere, little immediate inconvenience arose out of their absence. We took up a position, partly upon the heights, partly in the plains near Saratoga, where we remained unmolested till a late hour in the evening of the 15th.

It is hardly necessary for me to remind you, that in the prosecution of the American war, caution, amounting to timidity, sometimes received the appellation of prudence, and that indecisive and dilatory proceedings, from whatever cause they might arise, passed in too many instances current for the results of wise and sober consideration. There was a sort of instinctive apprehension of unseen dangers in the minds of our leaders in general, which seldom failed to operate with the

greatest power on occasions where there existed the feeblest ground for it ; and to such General Burgoyne proved himself, on this as on other occasions, not less a slave than his brother commanders. Instead of pushing vigorously forward to Albany at once, from which we were now distant little more than thirty miles, he put his columns in motion on the 15th, only that he might again halt, after compassing a journey of barely five miles. There, at a place called Dovacott, a second position was assumed, with the parade of persons satisfied with the successes which they had already obtained, and anxious to secure them; and there, during the whole of the 16th, the main body was kept in a state of useless and deplorable inactivity.

Whilst the army at large was thus wasting its time, and furnishing the enemy with all the leisure which they could desire for the completion of their preparations, one or two reconnoitring parties were sent out, confessedly with a view to ascertain the nature and resources of the surrounding country, but more truly, I believe, as a sort of excuse to the mind of the General himself. On this service I chanced to be em-

ployed. We found no trace of the Rebels within the space which our orders marked out for us, and very little from which to draw up a report different from that which our guides and spies had given previous to the commencement of the campaign. Here, as in the direction of Bennington, sweeping forests universally prevailed. In the heart of these, and at considerable intervals one from another, a few farm-houses and other settlements were placed, and wherever such occurred, there was the usual proportion of green meadow and open fields; but for the most part the scenery was such as prevails in other quarters of America, especially near the lakes, or by the courses of the large rivers. Creeks, and smaller streams were, indeed, more abundant here than we had yet found them, falling in, across the line of our route, with the Hudson's; but these were almost all extremely narrow, some of them quite shallow, and not one capable of impeding the progress either of infantry or artillery for a single hour. Yet General Burgoyne saw fit to delay the march of his columns till they should all be furnished with bridges constructed after a settled model: and

the consequence was, that when it did begin again to move, our march was at once tardy, irregular, and cruelly interrupted.

On the 17th we were once more in motion; but the same caution that had hitherto cramped us, continued to exert its influence. No doubt, the road by which we travelled was a bad one. Swamps and creeks intervened so frequently, that occasional halts to enable the pioneers to do their office, were indispensable; whilst detached bodies of the enemy began by degrees to show themselves, though they studiously avoided a rencontre with our advance. But these inconveniences, though unquestionably considerable, were not such as to produce the result which actually occurred. Our progress was ridiculously slow, and we again halted, about four miles from Still-water, having compassed barely one league and a half from sunrise till afternoon. Here, upon a spot of ground as favourable as could be selected, the camp was pitched, and all things were arranged, as if for a sojourn, not of a few hours, but of many weeks.

It was my fortune this night to be placed in command of a very important and hazardous

outpost. Our station lay in front of the army, in an open meadow covered with long rank grass, and intersected by a stream, which, though neither very deep nor very broad, was rendered difficult to pass on account of the steepness of its banks and the rapidity of its current. Over that stream my little band was pushed, for the purpose of covering a working-party, which immediately after nightfall was ordered up to construct a bridge; and being wholly unsupported, or rather entirely in advance of the regular chain, we were left to provide as we best could against such contingencies as might befall. I need not say that in such a situation my feelings were not of the most enviable description. There was nothing on either of my flanks to which I could look; no line of sentinels connecting me with other pickets, or even keeping open my communication with the rear; but I stood alone as it were, in the midst of an open plain, exposed on all sides to attack, yet myself expected to give protection to others.

As the sun had not set when I first took up my ground, some opportunity was given to pro-

vide against accidents, of which I gladly and eagerly proceeded to avail myself. I planted my guard, consisting of fifty men, directly in front of the spot marked out for the bridge, and pushed out my sentries in a convex line, some two or three hundred yards in advance. By this arrangement I flattered myself with giving at least some security both to my front and flanks, for the line of sentries fell back on both hands to the river; and trusting to a patrol for the protection of my rear, I endeavoured to persuade myself that all was safe. But as daylight departed, my apprehensions began to gather strength, more especially as the appearance of the sunset seemed to foretell a coming tempest; and when night closed-in in darkness the most impenetrable, I trembled for the fate which might await not myself only, but the entire army. That no blame, however, might attach to me, in case any untoward event did occur, I resolved not so much as to lie down; and the more to deceive an enemy should any such approach, I caused the fires to be extinguished, and commanded the men to maintain a profound but watchful silence.

You will easily believe, that with such impressions upon my mind, I experienced no inclination whatever to sleep. With the departure of the sun's last ray, my perambulations began; and from that moment I ceased not to wander round from one flank of the chain of sentries to another. For some time these excursions were productive of no other results than usually attend the visitations of their videttes by careful officers: the men were all kept attentive to their duty; but of danger, or the appearance of it, no symptom whatever was exhibited. Once indeed, and only once, when the patrol challenged from the rear, I was put completely on my mettle; but as the persons hailed proved to be friends—as they were indeed the artificers come up to fulfil their task, the sense of alarm which their arrival created, soon gave place to a degree of confidence more decided than I had heretofore experienced. Yet I could not wholly divest myself of the persuasion that the Americans were aware of our exposed situation, and would avail themselves of it; and the issue proved that neither my forebodings nor suspicions were groundless.

It might be about ten or eleven o'clock, our artificers being in full and rather loquacious employment in the rear, when, on going my rounds, I suddenly caught a sound as of persons moving slowly and with extreme caution through the grass. I stopped short, and, applying my ear to the ground, became instantly satisfied that my sense of hearing had not deceived me, though, to assist that sense with the sense of sight, not my utmost exertions availed any thing. The moon, already in the wane, had not yet risen, and the few stars which from time to time shot forth, were almost immediately darkened by a mass of black clouds, which a strong southerly breeze drove through the sky. I could not, therefore, distinguish any object at the distance of five yards; and even noises became every moment more and more indistinct, as the increasing force of the wind caused the weeds and boughs to wave with greater and greater violence. The tread of men is, however, a sound which when once heard it is not easy to forget; and hence, though the sighing of the wind and the rustling of the long grass caused frequent

and long interruptions, I still caught at intervals the trampling of feet, as if people were defiling past me. I challenged loudly, and my challenge was repeated by the line of sentries, one after another. At this instant, there came a lull in the storm; for the fresh breeze had gradually increased to a storm; and that lull, in all probability, saved us. Not I alone, but the sentinels everywhere overheard the shuffling which a halt suddenly and quietly ordered never fails to produce; and it became apparent to all, that our post would shortly be maintained only by dint of courage and hard fighting.

Thus circumstanced, I felt that not a moment was to be lost. Getting my picket under arms, and despatching a corporal to warn the artificers of their danger, I took with me a patrol of six men, and stole quietly forward towards the spot from whence the sounds seemed to proceed. We had advanced but a few paces in front of the videttes, when the leading file, in obedience to the orders which I had given them, fired. Instantly there arose a clamour of voices; and the shots being answered by a

discharge of twenty or thirty firelocks, a strong body of Americans advanced. They came on, too, upon our right, as if they had been moving for some time unobserved, in the direction of the river, and had succeeded in passing the greater number of our sentinels; and in a minute after, we found ourselves warmly and awkwardly engaged with men of whose position, as well as of their numerical strength, we were necessarily ignorant.

In all night attacks, the assailing party has, and must have, at least at the beginning of the fray, a decided advantage. Men do not care, when first fired upon, to face they know not what danger, or from whence proceeding; and hence, if a night attack be but vigorously and prudently followed up, it seldom fails of success. But to be thus followed up, it must be made not by raw militia-men, however individually brave, but by regular troops, well disciplined, and accustomed to act together by word of command. Now the Americans happened not to be disciplined, as our people happened to be the reverse; and hence, though we gave way at first, retreating almost to the

edge of the stream, the assailants failed to turn their advantage to a just account. They kept up, indeed, a heavy and incessant fire, more magnificent to behold than destructive in its effects; but they hung back, happily for us, in their advance, and hence gave us ample time to recover from the panic into which they had at first thrown us. Our entire strength was by this means brought together, and formed a chain across the point at which the pioneers were employed; after which, instead of waiting to be again attacked, we pushed forward boldly, but with extreme caution, so as to meet and discompose the arrangements of the enemy.

Stealing on in this plight, and preserving a silence the most profound, we gradually drew upon the blaze of the American musketry. As we were ourselves totally unseen all the while, we contrived to approach so near, that at last the faces of the men themselves became perceptible, and we saw before us a dark line, regularly drawn up, and covering in close order a space of several hundred feet, from right to left. The spectacle was at once grand and imposing; for, whatever might be their deficiency

in discipline, the fellows showed, by their immovable front, that in courage, at least, they were not deficient; and as they outnumbered us by at least six to one, it savoured somewhat of excess of rashness, to think of closing with them. But I knew that my situation was a desperate one; I knew also that my followers were brave, and could safely be depended on; so I gave the word, in a loud tone, to fire a volley, and close. The order was instantly obeyed. My people, though in extended files, rushed forward to the charge, and in an instant we were engaged hand to hand with our assailants.

The immediate effect of a charge so spirited was to cause the enemy to recoil; they even lost their order for a time, and in some parts of the line turned and fled; but the odds against us were tremendous, and soon began to tell. The Americans' fire alone was overwhelming; and though our brave fellows withstood it nobly, they were at last compelled to give ground. And now it may truly be said, that we fought for life or death. Borne back to the edge of the stream, at a point where its steep

and rocky bank rendered all effort to pass hopeless, nothing seemed left for us, except to sell our lives at the dearest; for a cry suddenly arose of most perilous import, forbidding all expectation of quarter, even in case of submission. Where this cry originated, I know not; for, to do them justice, it was no part of the American policy to render the war one of extermination; but that it did sound over the noise of the strife, and was repeated from man to man, I have the evidence of my senses for declaring. Yet I much question whether it did not, upon the whole, prove serviceable to us. If any man had previously entertained an idea of surrender, the shout of "No Quarter!" caused him instantly to abandon it; and hence all fought like persons labouring under the sure conviction, that their lives must pay the forfeit either of cowardice or insubordination.

There was, upon the summit of the right bank, a stripe of low underwood, of the slender cover afforded by which we gladly availed ourselves. There we lay for a full hour, exposed to a fusillade, which, but for the thick darkness,

which rendered it comparatively harmless, must have annihilated us in a few minutes; and, strange to say, not an effort was made by the troops in our rear, either to support us in our position, or bring us off. That the alarm was, indeed, communicated to them, a variety of circumstances pointed out. In an instant all the fires in the camp were extinguished; the roll of drums, and the braying of bugles, came up upon the blast, and every other sound which usually accompanies the sudden calling of men from sleep to arms, was distinctly heard. But not a company was put in motion, at least as far as we could discover, though of the extreme peril of our situation, it appeared impossible that our leader could be ignorant. Fortunately for us, however, the Americans were slow to believe that a British General could give up one of his advanced posts to destruction. These indications of a general stir in the camp were no sooner observed, than the fire of the Rebels began to slacken, and they gradually withdrew from before a handful of men, not one of whom, had they persevered a few minutes longer, could have escaped. I need not say, that never

has a conqueror rejoiced more sincerely at his victory, than we rejoiced this night at the retrogression of our enemies, over whom, however, we were hardly weak enough to triumph, as if by dint of our own personal valour we had repulsed them.

The last shot had been long fired, and the last shadow of an American withdrawn, before we ventured to emerge from the thicket, or feel our way towards the front. Seeing, however, that no enemy rallied, we at length took courage to approach the open country; and our satisfaction was far from trifling, when we found that not a vestige of the force, with which we had just been engaged, remained. They were gone, leaving behind them manifest traces of their route in the long grass trodden down into numerous pathways; and great and well-founded was our joy, when we perceived that these all led in a direction decidedly towards the front. Thus assured that the retrogression was no feint to draw us from our place of safety, and expose us to fresh assaults, we proceeded to assume once more the ground from which we had so lately been driven; whilst a messenger

was despatched, with all haste, to the rear, in order to acquaint the General with the result of the skirmish.

It was not without considerable difficulty that the latter contrived, during the darkness of this tempestuous night, to make his way across the stream; but he did cross it, and in due time the pioneers, who had retreated on the first fire, returned to complete their tasks. In the mean while, having carefully replaced my sentinels, I sent out parties in all directions, to examine the field, as well as they could, for the wounded and dying. On our side, three and twenty men had fallen, of whom fifteen were soon brought in, some more, and others less severely hurt; but of the enemy no more than six were discovered, and of these, all, except one, died before medical assistance could arrive. That the number of wounded among the Americans fell short of ours, I can hardly believe: for their dense order exposed them terribly; and our fire, though more broken than theirs, was not less deliberate: but being very superior in numbers, they doubtless removed all that appeared capable of removal when they retreated; and per-

haps these were left behind, only because they failed by their cries or motions to attract the notice of their retiring comrades. Be this, however, as it may, it is very certain that we could testify to the destiny of no more than six wounded men of our assailants, whilst, as I have already stated, our own wounded fell not short of fifteen. Nor was the proportion between the numbers killed on both sides very different. Seven British, with only three Americans, were found dead when daylight came in; and hence, unless it be supposed that the Rebels removed their dead also, the loss experienced by us was, even in point of numbers, far greater than that suffered by the enemy. But I am anticipating.

It might be about one or two o'clock in the morning when the Americans retreated; from which period, however, up to the return of dawn, no fresh alarm occurred. As may well be believed, that was to us a period of no common anxiety and interest. It is true that the General was no sooner made aware of our deliverance than he ordered up an entire battalion, for the double purpose of supporting us, and more effectually covering the operations of the arti-

ficers; but even the presence of this large force in our rear was far from rendering us satisfied with our position, or allaying that agitation and excitement which the events of the earlier part of the night had occasioned. No man closed an eye; whilst all watched, with an impatience the most unbounded, the gradual approach of light. To add to our sources of grievance, the storm which had hitherto confined itself entirely to wind, broke up into passing, but tremendous showers. They were cold and cutting, driving furiously from the north, and partaking as much of the character of hail as of rain; and they came not unaccompanied by the usual attendants on such gusts, an occasional flash of lightning and burst of thunder. The effect of all this was, it must be confessed, extremely fine,—at least it would have been so considered, had it occurred at any other season, or under different circumstances; but we already felt the influence of too many causes of excitation, not to feel that such an addition to them was far from being agreeable. True, the lightning laid bare, from time to time, every surrounding object. We could distinct-

ly observe, for example, as often as a flash occurred, not only the chain of videttes leaning on their firelocks, but the trampled grass where the fight had taken place, with caps, pouches, arms, and even bodies scattered over it; whilst the same blaze satisfied us for the moment, that no fresh columns were hovering near, nor fresh ambuscades threatening us. But there was an irritability about us which caused us to derive from such displays no gratification whatever; indeed the very sound of the thunder was distressing, as all loud noises are, to men who labour under nervous agitation. In a word, the night, though marked by no fresh adventures, passed painfully and heavily away; and we hailed the first streaks of dawn with a degree of delight, for which I am sure there was no solid foundation in the circumstances by which we were surrounded.

CHAPTER VIII.

THERE was no necessity on the morning of the 18th for any particular exertion of authority in order to get both the pickets and the supporting battalion under arms. The former, indeed, from the close of the nocturnal encounter, had not quitted their ranks, merely sitting down upon the ground, with their firelocks in their hands; the latter, if they slept at all, slept so lightly, that the faintest cry sufficed to rouse them. And it was well for us that such precautions had been taken. Though unsuccessful in their night attack, the Americans appeared determined not to permit the construction of our bridges to proceed without interruption; for the morning was yet grey and obscure when

a large body of infantry, supported by a few cavalry, were observed moving towards us.

Not a moment was lost on our side in making proper preparations to meet and repel the threatened attack. There was a small wood or rather copse upon the right, somewhat in advance of our line of sentries, which we immediately pushed forward to occupy ; whilst the regiment in support hastily passed the stream, and took up the ground which my picket had abandoned. At the same time a couple of six-pounders were planted under the ridge of a rising ground, so as to enfilade any column which might approach the spot where the workmen were still busy ; and a company of light infantry, being thrown in extended order forward, lay down, for the sake of concealment, in the long grass. It is to be observed, that the country immediately in our front chanced to be particularly clear and open. The forest, parting, as it were, to the right and left, gave room to a bare district, full of hills and valleys and natural inequalities, along which a formidable force of Americans was now approaching, with the evident intention of driving back

our outposts, and breaking down the bridges already in a state of forwardness.

Every man who has faced danger by night as well as by day, must be aware, how different his sensations are on each of these occasions. Having ample light to direct us, and seeing clearly how and from what quarter we were about to be assailed, our arrangements were made and our posts assumed with perfect coolness; and as the storm had died wholly away, and a clear but frosty atmosphere succeeded, we made ready in the highest spirits to give the Rebels a reception. They came on, for a while, in compact and regular order, the head of their column covered by clouds of skirmishers, who pressed forward apparently in confusion, but with every demonstration of courage, till, having reached the brow of an eminence about long musket-shot from our position, they halted, as if irresolute what farther course to pursue. From the height of the swell on which they stood, we were at no loss to conjecture that they had obtained a perfect view of our dispositions; and their evident wavering gave testimony that these were not

according to their wishes. Nevertheless, it seemed as if some spirit more daring than the rest at last gained the ascendency; for after a pause of several minutes, the skirmishers again pressed on, and the column began to descend.

These movements were no sooner ascertained than our riflemen threw themselves each behind a tree or knoll, and the light infantry, rising from their places of concealment, assumed an attitude of defiance. For half a minute perhaps, or something more, all remained thus; till, the enemy arriving within point blank range, our bugles sounded, and a dropping and desultory tiraillade began. It was kept up with considerable warmth on both sides, the enemy sometimes pressing forward, at other times retiring; but on our part no change of ground was effected, for our sole object was to maintain ourselves where we were, and keep the assailants in check. As the column advanced, however, our light infantry gradually and reluctantly fell back, till at last they fairly turned the copse, and we riflemen were fain to withdraw, in order

to escape capture. But we had not thus long held our post for no purpose. Of the enemy's skirmishers several were seen to drop, and many more to steal away like men disabled, whilst their column itself received one well-directed volley, just as it gained the left of the copse, and was preparing to deploy.

In the mean while the battalion in rear had formed line, and advanced so far as to render the escape of the skirmishers safe and speedy. Opening to the right and left, that its front might be left clear, we threw ourselves on either flank; and the enemy deploying at the same moment, a close and desperate contest was anticipated.

But before a musket was fired on either side, the enemy began suddenly to waver, and all the exertions of their officers failed in preserving order in the ranks. At this moment, our guns, which had hitherto been kept with great judgment concealed, were run to the brow of the hill, and opened with round and grape. They were admirably served; and the first discharge striking full into the American line, the confusion, which had already begun, became com-

plete. They turned and fled, not so much as a skirmisher pausing to cover them; and though we pursued with all haste, firing from time to time as an opportunity offered, they escaped with the loss of some eight or ten men killed and wounded. This was the last effort made to interrupt our operations, or hinder our passage of the creek; and the remainder of the day was spent in quiet, as well at the outposts, as in camp.

In the mean while, the working-parties, so far from intermitting in their tasks, toiled on with increased diligence and in greater numbers. Not one bridge, but three, were by this means completed, each capable of bearing the heaviest ordnance which we had brought with us into the field; and an advance, as the immediate prelude of a general action, was talked of, as the occurrence of the morrow.

Being relieved from the dangerous and toilsome duty of outpost, the 18th was spent by me, partly in the refreshment of a sound sleep, and partly in examining the nature of the position occupied by our army. It was a range of heights, which advanced on the left till it became parallel with the course of the Hudson's,

and gradually shelved away towards the right, where it ended in a valley. Short as our sojourn here had been, General Burgoyne appeared to have bestowed much labour on its fortification; for there were breastworks here and there, a redoubt in the centre, and a battery covered by a ditch to enfilade the whole. Besides this, he had constructed several forts, in which his stores of provision and other necessaries were laid up, and the batteaux and vessels were all moored under cover of our guns, close to the extreme left of the line. To say the truth, the ground appeared to be chosen with some judgment, as well as strengthened with considerable skill; though it may admit of a question whether both the judgment and skill exhibited would not have been greater, had no pause, beyond that of a few hours, been made here.

Nothing befell during the night, either to the army at large or to myself in particular, worthy of being repeated. The Americans, as if satisfied with the results of their former attempts, did not molest us; and my private meditations received no interruption from any renewed applications on the part of Fraser, or our chief.

But on the morrow affairs assumed a widely different aspect. An hour before sunrise the whole army formed in three columns of march, each fronting one of the bridges which had been constructed for it; and as soon as there was light enough to distinguish objects at the distance of a mile, the long expected and long wished for movement began.

As this was certainly one of the most memorable steps taken during the whole campaign, and may be said with perfect truth to have decided our fate, it may not be amiss, if I lay before you a minute and particular account of it.

Having already described the nature of the position occupied by the British army previous to its advance, it is not necessary that I should say more than has been said on that subject. With respect to the enemy, again, they had withdrawn from Saratoga several weeks before, and having established themselves at Still-water, about half way between the former place and Albany, it was expected that they would there abide an encounter. We were the more confirmed in this notion, as several deserters came in with intelligence, that General Gates

was busily engaged in the erection of works; that he had recalled Arnold from Fort Stanwix, whither on the alarm of Colonel St. Leger's successes he had hastened; and that all the Militiamen who could be prevailed on to bear arms, were moved into the camp, and there enrolled in battalions. It is hardly necessary to add, that the site of our own camp, which we quitted on the 19th, was not many leagues distant from that of General Gates. We calculated, indeed, on reaching the vicinity of the latter an hour or two before sunset, provided no attempts were made to harass or interrupt us by the way; and we looked forward to the 20th, as to the day which should decide the fate of New England, as well as of the brave army which was now invading it.

With respect to the general bearings of the country which divided one corps from the other, almost enough has been stated to convey to your minds a tolerably accurate conception. For a mile or two beyond the stream, little or no wood intervened; but there were several valleys, hemmed in on each side by hills; and one which, from its peculiar roughness, as well

as the rugged nature of its banks, deserves to be styled a ravine. Across that, it was necessary for our troops to move ; and as it chanced to be pretty extensive, stretching on one side almost to the river, whilst on the other it pushed into the woods, a good deal of caution seemed necessary, in order to avoid being arrested there. I have said that the army formed this morning in three distinct columns of march : the following is the order which these assumed, and the routes which they followed.

On the left of the whole, were arranged the brigade of General Reidesdel, with the entire park of artillery under the command of Major-general Philips. This column pursued the main road, which wound through the meadows parallel with the Hudson's, and was covered in its progress by a detachment of yagers, led on by a gallant Hessian called Rembach. The right column, again, consisted of Brigadier-general Fraser's corps, sustained by Colonel Breyman's Germans, which made a circuit so as to pass the ravine without plunging into it, and afterwards to protect the advance of the centre

or main body. Its front and flanks were covered by the Marksmen, by the Canadian companies, and the Indians; who struck off towards the woods, as most convenient for their particular style of fighting. Between these detached corps moved the main body, under the immediate orders of General Burgoyne. It was directed to advance straight to the front; to descend one side of the glen and mount the other, without pausing; and to form on the farther height, where it might wait in comparative safety till the detached corps should have made good their passage, and resumed their communications. Finally, one regiment, the 47th, was left behind, partly as a reserve, and partly to defend the batteaux and stores; whilst proper signals were agreed upon, to give notice of the progress which each corps was making, should they become unavoidably separated the one from the other.

Being myself attached to the right column, I can pretend to give no very exact or regular account of the movements either of the left or centre; for, the moment when the word was given to advance, all took the directions seve-

rally pointed out to them. For ourselves, we moved on, following the bend of a semicircular hill, till we became lost in the mazes of a forest apparently interminable; but we met with no opposition during a march of some hours, even our skirmishers failing to discover an enemy, though most assiduous in looking for him. We heard, indeed, soon after our separation from Burgoyne's column, a desultory fire of musketry, as if his advance were engaged with an American picket, or some ambuscade had been beaten up and dispersed; but as the sound manifestly inclined every moment more and more to the rear, it created no feeling of uneasiness either among men or officers. On the contrary, a thousand rude jokes were bandied about, especially among the younger men, and those least accustomed to the nature of American warfare; and even some veterans scrupled not to express their ardent desire that the Yankies would hazard an action for once, on what they were pleased to term a fair field. For my own part, the recollection of what Yankies had done at Bennington taught me to think of them more respectfully than many of

my neighbours; and though, like them, I could not but regard our opponents as more formidable in an inclosed than an open country, I was far from supposing that they would prove themselves contemptible in either situation. Nay more, I knew from a variety of circumstances, that the Americans had of late acquired a degree of confidence, for which we hardly gave them credit. Their attacks upon my own picket, though not very judiciously managed, displayed, nevertheless, no little spirit of enterprise and daring; and however anxious I might be to see things brought to the issue of a battle, I confess that I looked forward to that event with some apprehension. Still, my confidence in the people around me was boundless; and if I did not exactly join in the taunts and gibes with which they thought fit during the present movement to amuse themselves, I at least pushed on as resolutely determined as any to do my duty, whenever I should be called upon to do it.

The orders given to us at starting were, to gain the extremity of the ravine with as little delay as possible; and then, declining to the

left, to take possession of a lofty eminence which overlooked the crest of the range of hills which the centre and left columns were ascending. A journey of two hours brought us to this point, where, just as the woodlands began, the valley ended, and we commenced our march in echellon towards the left, without having as yet been called upon to fire a musket or deploy a company. This movement, however, had hardly been made, when the report of several cannon gave intimation that more than a skirmish was impending; and we pressed forward in the firm expectation of being engaged as soon as we should clear the thicket and emerge into the open country. It can hardly be said that our expectations were without foundation. It is true that we were not instantly moved up to oppose a hostile line, nor yet brought at once under the range of the enemy's artillery; but the first spectacle which presented itself was a heavy column of Americans in full march to fall upon our main body. The latter had, it appeared, passed the ravine previous to our arrival at the height which we were directed to occupy; and the former, not expecting a

second column to debouch from woods which they had regarded as impervious, were preparing to assault what they considered the extreme right of the British line.

As yet little else than an exchange of cannon shots had passed between the hostile armies, when the head of our column showing itself upon the hill, the enemy instantly halted, and the firing ceased. For a moment, and only for a moment, all things remained quiet; but the Americans, suddenly facing about, began to countermarch, and in less than a quarter of an hour were lost to our view. They fell back, however, not like men bent on a precipitate retreat, nor yet with the wavering step which usually characterizes the manœuvres of generals doubtful what course to pursue,—but promptly, briskly, and in admirable order, giving us the best ground for supposing that their plans, instead of being deranged, were merely altered. Whoever entertained such ideas at the moment, was certainly not mistaken in the ground on which he formed them; for in as short a time as the state of the case would permit, we received evidence enough, that a new arrangement of

attack had been made, and was already in process of being pursued.

Our troops had all come up, and were in full possession of the hill, when there arose suddenly from the extreme left a fire of musketry, which continued in volleys, like the rolling of drums, for several minutes. How or where this was going on, it was impossible for us to say; for though our position was a commanding one, not only the natural inequalities of the ground, but a good deal of wood scattered here and there, hindered us from seeing farther towards the left, than the post occupied by the centre column. It appeared, however, that even this attack, fierce as it must have doubtless been, was not that on which the enemy mainly depended for success. Before we could well arrange our thoughts, far less reply to the questions which each eagerly put to the other, a fresh operation developed itself, and the main body became warmly, and, as it struck us, very unequally engaged, at a moment when such an event was least expected. A corps of some four or five thousand men, led on as we afterwards heard by General Arnold, suddenly pushed

against the left of Burgoyne's division; and a contest began as warm and as well contested as it has ever been my fortune to witness, either as an actor or spectator.

To oppose this tremendous assault, only three British battalions, and these extremely weak, could be brought up. So well had the enemy arranged matters, that for nearly four hours our left could bring no assistance to the centre, nor even one flank of the centre support the other; whilst we upon the right had received orders so decisive on no account whatever to give up the high ground, that Fraser, though as enterprising an officer as any in the service, felt himself perfectly paralysed. We were accordingly condemned to stand passive spectators of an affair, in which nothing short of the most determined courage, as well as a state of discipline the most commendable, could have saved a whole brigade from utter annihilation. As I am speaking to men who have themselves served, and know how laudably jealous regiments are of their renown, it would be unjust in me to conceal the numbers of the corps which on that day covered themselves with glory. They were the

20th, the 21st, and the 62d, who, from three o'clock in the afternoon till seven in the evening, remained unbroken under a fire which left not one fourth of their originally inadequate numbers fit to do duty.

Whilst this was going on, General Fraser, whose impatience was sufficiently manifested by his look and gestures, despatched aid-de-camp after aid-de-camp to General Burgoyne, requesting permission to move from his vantage-ground, should it be only for a time. What became of these messengers it is not for me to surmise; but as I happened to be near the General during the greater part of the day, I can testify that not one returned,—a contingency which failed not to increase, to a degree beyond all endurance, the anxiety under which that gallant fellow had previously laboured. At last, despairing of receiving instructions, he determined to act for himself. Leaving a body of German grenadiers to defend the hill, he gave the word for the rest of the brigade to advance, and in two seconds we were in full march, upon the flank of the American column of attack.

It was a splendid spectacle to behold the

cool and soldier-like manner in which General Arnold disposed himself to keep in check this bold advance. Wheeling up a couple of his rearmost battalions, he caused several hundred riflemen to extend across the open country, and then urged them forward to meet the Marksmen and Canadians, who covered the approach of Fraser's column. No great while elapsed ere we were engaged. The enemy, however, knew their ground; they were well drilled, admirable shots, and by no means deficient in bravery; and hence, though bravely attacked by men not more ignorant than themselves in the art of skirmishing, they would not be driven in. Even the advance of Breyman's corps in solid column hardly succeeded in moving them; nor is it easy to say what result might have ensued, had not other aid been at hand. But at this critical juncture a fresh force came up from a quarter where we scarcely expected it; and the victory, which for so many hours had hung doubtful, finally inclined to the side of the British arms.

I have said that the enemy, on observing the arrival of Fraser's corps on the high ground

at the right of the ravine, suddenly suspended the attack which they had at first directed against our centre, and turned a heavy column, supported by a couple of light guns, towards our left. This soon fell in with General Reidesdel's brigade, with which it exchanged several close and well-directed volleys; but, contenting himself with alarming these troops, the officer in command of the Americans immediately withdrew again, and united himself with the corps which General Arnold was preparing to lead againt the regiments above specified. Some light troops were, however, left, if not sufficient to hold the wood, at all events capable of embarrassing the movements of a column incumbered rather than assisted, in a close country, by the presence of a numerous artillery; and these contrived, by dint of repeated demonstrations, to impose for some time upon General Reidesdel, so as to hinder him from detaching any portion of his force to the assistance of Burgoyne. General Philips, however, who accompanied Reidesdel, and took charge, in a peculiar manner, of the park, was not slow in seeing through the veil which sufficed to

blind the eyes of his brother officer. As the sound of firing increased on his right, he became more and more convinced, that to their column no serious injury was intended; and he at length prevailed upon General Reidesdel to sanction a movement with four guns and a battalion towards the scene of action.

Driving in the American riflemen, General Philips succeeded, by dint of extraordinary perseverance, in making his way through the wood. He arrived just as the 20th, after behaving with a degree of gallantry almost unprecedented, had begun to give way, and the enemy were pushing forward to occupy a point, from which they might have enfiladed the other battalions, already more than sufficiently pressed. Philips saw this, and made haste to remedy the evil. He dashed forward, bringing with him only a few followers; rallied the broken regiment, led it back in the most magnificent style to the charge, and then, hurrying away to the right, brought up his guns to the edge of the wood, from which they opened a tremendous fire of grape and canister upon the enemy's flank. The effect of these arrangements be-

came manifest in a moment. After a brave but ineffectual attempt to carry the cannon at the point of the bayonet, the Americans were compelled to give way; and, fresh troops joining the 20th already advancing to the charge, the rout became complete. Nor was the case different on our side. The riflemen, perceiving that their comrades were in full retreat, fell back with precipitation on their support, which in its return retired upon the column from which it had been drawn, and that being exposed to a sweeping fire from Philips's guns, soon lost its order and fled. Yet were our people too much worn down by past exertions, and too much enfeebled, many of them, by wounds, not less than fatigue, to take full advantage of the panic. The closing in of night, likewise, was favourable to the Americans, who, to do them justice, fought bravely and steadily to the last. Their flight, for such, at first, it certainly was, speedily assumed the aspect of an orderly retreat; and they quitted, rather than fled from, a well-contested field.

CHAPTER IX.

THOUGH successful at every point, and perfectly aware that they were so, it can hardly be said that their present victory produced any very remarkable effect upon the spirits of the British troops. It was a new feature in the war for the Rebels to become the assailants, and their armies to meet ours in the open field, rivals for glory ; nor was there a man amongst us who appeared not perfectly to feel that such a step would not have been taken, were not their numbers much more formidable than our most liberal calculations led us to expect. Again, though undeniably foiled in all their efforts, the Rebels had fought like men who possessed confidence in themselves. There was no longer that deference for discipline, which in the earlier cam-

paigns distinguished them; leading them to regard themselves as totally inadequate to meet a regular force, except under cover of an inclosed country, or in the rear of intrenchments. On the contrary, their Militia, vying with the Continentals, had left behind them all the shelter which the woodlands might have furnished; and marching boldly up to the teeth both of English and German grenadiers, engaged them muzzle to muzzle, and occasionally hand to hand. These facts tended to prove, that the moral superiority which we had hitherto been accustomed to evince, was no more,—and hence that our future successes must arise out of the superior skill of our leaders, not less than from the trained valour of our inferior officers and men.

But it was not on these accounts alone, influential as they doubtless were, that most of us felt disposed to regard the late affair in the light rather of a misadventure than a victory. Our loss in killed and wounded was tremendous. Upwards of five hundred men, including some of the most promising officers in the army, had fallen; and that, too, to purchase nothing more than a little empty honour. Among the

number of the slain was poor Jones, the destined husband of Miss Macrea. Though he never held up his head from the moment when his mistress's murder was communicated to him, and declined all intercourse even with the most beloved of his former friends, Jones was too much of a soldier, not to speak of him in the light of a man of honour, ever to neglect his duty because of the pressure of private grief. Wherever his post might be, there he was sure to be found; and to the last he remained, in heart and affections, as warmly devoted as ever to the cause which he had espoused. It was, indeed, abundantly evident, that to him life possessed no farther attractions. Unless unavoidably hindered by other matters, he took part in every skirmish, exposing himself with the greatest deliberation to the enemy's fire; and to-day he met the fate which no man could doubt that he had long coveted. He fell covered with wounds when defending the guns of which he was in charge, and was found lying beside two Americans, both of whom, in all probability, perished by his hand.

As soon as the firing had totally ceased, and

it was ascertained that the enemy had withdrawn, orders were issued for the concentration of our divisions on the field of battle; and the whole army made ready to bivouack on the crest of the hill which had been so long contested. Whilst this was going on, parties went abroad in all directions, to collect such of the wounded as had not been removed during the fray; and the return of these with their melancholy burdens, presented a spectacle upon which no man could look with indifference. As they passed between the fires, which already blazed through the line, it was piteous to behold the drooping heads and powerless limbs of men who but a few hours before had been our liveliest and most esteemed companions; whilst their shrieks and groans smote fearfully upon the ear, as often as some false step on the part of their bearers caused their wounds to open afresh. Among the number of those thus conveyed to the rear, there was one with whom in the course of service I had become intimately acquainted. It so happened, that the party in charge of him passed the very spot on which, worn out with the exertions of the day, I had

lain down to sleep; and the sound of his voice, even in the utterance of a complaint, being recognized, I immediately rose to ascertain whether imagination might not have deceived me. It had not. The mutilated creature thus borne past me, was the same with whom I had spent many cheerful hours both by night and day; and compassion for his sufferings getting the better of personal languor, I determined to deprive myself of rest, in order that I might nurse and attend upon him.

It has been already stated, that when the present expedition was first determined upon, such were the notions entertained relative to its facility of accomplishment, that the wives of several officers, some of them incumbered by their children, resolved to follow our fortunes. For a time these ladies travelled in rear of the columns, being conveyed in covered calashes, and tolerably well attended to; and whenever the columns halted, they joined their husbands in camp, and became inmates of tents. But as the season advanced, and the difficulties of the army began to multiply, they kept behind the encampment altogether, and

dwelt in huts constructed out of logs, somewhat after the fashion of block-houses. By the passage of the Hudson's they were compelled to abandon even their block-houses, and once more share the fate of those most dear to them; and now they had taken refuge in certain farm-houses, scattered in the rear of our lines, from which they became spectators of the bloody contest of which I have just given an account.

It was towards one of these houses that I followed my wounded friend. On entering, I found every room crowded with mangled wretches, whose cries might be distinctly heard many paces from the door; and in the midst of these were several delicate females, whose humane attentions to the poor fellows no words could adequately describe. There sat the Baroness Reidesdel, administering from her slender stock of wine a few drops to a dying soldier, who could thank her only with a glance from his dim eye and a faint movement of his head; and there too was the lady of Major Ackland, whose heroic behaviour on an after-occasion has obtained for her an immortality of ho-

nourable fame. Even the children, and there were three of Lady Reidesdel's, the eldest of whom could not exceed six years, appeared to be aware that they were thrown into a situation of no ordinary interest; for they either sat in a corner perfectly quiet, or moved after their mother with noiseless tread, as if afraid to jar the nerves of the miserable wounded by the slightest noise. I need not say to you that an hospital, on the night after a battle, is at all times a terrible sight; but on no occasion have I visited one with feelings more harrowed, and yet more mixed, than I experienced then.

My friend, who had received several wounds, by one of which his leg was dreadfully broken, was laid upon a little straw in one corner of an inner apartment. Though extremely weak from loss of blood, he still retained his senses, sufficiently at least to recognize my features as I hung over him; and he showed by the glance of his eye, as well as by an involuntary movement of his lip, that he was grateful for the compassionate feeling which brought me hither. Alas! I could render but slight

service to him. I held the bandage, it is true, which the surgeon wrapped round his body; I laved his side with water, and strove by my voice and gestures to inspire him with hope; but I could do nothing effectual to relieve him, and it was very evident that he was aware of this. So conscious indeed was he that nothing could save him, that not all the remonstrances of the medical attendant or myself could prevail upon him to keep quiet. He struggled hard to speak,—there was something which he manifestly desired to communicate,—but what it was, or to whom it related, I know not. Poor fellow! the only words to which he succeeded in giving utterance were—"My Mother," pointing at the same time to his watch: from which I collected that he wished that memento to be conveyed to her; and he died in something less than half an hour from the moment when he was brought to the hospital. You all know, gentlemen, how perfectly a state of continued warfare blunts the feelings and dries up the sympathies. It would never do were men to mourn "like those without hope" over every comrade

who falls in battle ; and hence rarely is a tear seen to moisten the cheek of a soldier after he has served his first campaign. But I confess that I was this night weak enough to shed them in abundance. I wept over my poor friend till my very eyes ached; and I quitted his pallet with a weight upon my heart, such as I do not recollect often to have rested there.

Turning away from the discharge of this melancholy duty, I was met by a party of six men, who bore the body of some one in a blanket, and were seeking for a place on which to lay him. They directed their steps to the corner where my unfortunate comrade lay, and finding on examination that he was dead, they instantly, and without ceremony, removed him. I would have remonstrated against this precipitancy, had remonstrance been of any avail ; or rather had I not felt that the corpse could suffer nothing from exposure ; but a moment's reflection served to convince me, that the humanity which would have dictated resistance to the measure, was a mistaken one, and I acquiesced in it. Not that I permitted even the lifeless body of one whom I had loved, to be thrown out to the

night air. It was laid carefully under a tree till a hole could be dug for it; and then, by the light of torches, I committed it to the grave. These were rapid proceedings, doubtless; but in such a situation, where would have been the advantage of delay? So, satisfied that I had done right, I returned, as fast as weariness would permit, to my watch-fire. Beside that, I cast myself down, and being sheltered by my cloak from the dew, and keeping my feet warm by turning them to the blaze, I soon fell fast asleep, in spite of the melancholy which continued to oppress me.

It was still profoundly dark on the morning of the 20th, when the word passed quietly from rank to rank, called the men to their stations. The fires having been neglected some time, had almost all burned low, and a pretty sharp frost having set in, we felt its influence acutely in every joint. For my own part, I rose cold and stiff, my cloak rustling on my shoulders like a garment of ice; and so benumbed were my feet and limbs, that for some minutes after I quitted my lair, it was not without a positive exertion that I hindered myself from sinking. By dint of

chafing and beating them, however, I succeeded in gradually restoring the circulation which the intense cold of the night had interrupted; and then, after seeing that the men were in order, and the arms piled and at hand, I ran to and fro till something of my natural temperature returned.

Day dawned in due time, and a spectacle was presented to us, of which no man, who has not looked upon the site of a lately fought battle, can form any conception. As far as the eye could reach, the open fields were strewed with broken arms, hats, caps, pouches, bayonets, balls, and pieces of clothing; whilst here lay a tumbril or ammunition waggon dismounted from its axletree, and there a gun, abandoned and upset, as if to hinder it from being removed. In every direction the grass was trodden down; long and deep tracks of wheels cut the meadow across and across; and at frequent intervals the very soil seemed scorched, as if quantities of gunpowder had been exploded upon it. Nor were other and no less striking manifestations of yesterday's drama wanting. The dead lay around us in heaps; Englishmen and

Americans, men and horses, mingled indiscriminately together: and such had been the desperation of the contest, that in some places the foot of one foeman touched the very head of another. But the most remarkable objects in this horrid panorama, were several American Marksmen who hung lifeless among the branches of trees. These persons who had mounted for the purpose of securing a good aim, and had done considerable execution, wounding among others an aid-de-camp of General Philips whilst in the act of conversing with Burgoyne, soon drew towards themselves a full share of our riflemen's attention. As they furnished admirable marks, and our men were not ignorant how to strike them, very few escaped; and there they still hung, having been caught by the boughs, among which they waved to and fro like the rocking cradles in use among the Indians.

It was General Burgoyne's first business to order out working parties, by whom the dead were collected together, and buried, without distinction of nations, in pits dug to receive them; after which the troops were directed to

eat their morning meal preparatory to a fresh movement. The latter occupation being completed, our columns pushed forward, taking a direction rather more to the left; and again halted, a little before noon, within cannon-shot of the enemy's lines. Now, then, for the first time since the opening of the campaign, can the hostile armies be said to have come in presence of one another; and as our positions were somewhat striking, it may not be amiss if I endeavour to give you a tolerably faithful description of them.

The Americans, who were now understood to be commanded by General Gates, under whom were Arnold as second, and Sebright as third in command, had strongly intrenched themselves at a place called Still-water, distant about twelve miles from the Mohawks, and double that space from Albany. Their right, which rested upon the main road, as that did upon the Hudson's, was rendered perfectly secure by the presence of a strong redoubt, which would have required a series of regular approaches to reduce it; whilst their left, besides being covered by close woods, was protected by

numerous abatis, several breastworks, and a battery for heavy cannon. Along the centre ran a line of field intrenchments, flêches, breastworks, and *radans*, all of them so placed as to be flanked by the fire from the redoubt, or exposed to a cross fire from each other; whilst over the front of the whole was scattered just so much of thicket as to screen the lines themselves from minute inspection, at the same time that it furnished no adequate shelter to an assailing force. Of the numbers of troops encamped within these lines, it was not easy to form any correct estimate. By some they were rated at twenty thousand, by others at little more than ten thousand men; whilst the truth, as is usual in most cases, probably lay between. But whatever their numbers might be, of one fact we had abundant evidence, that not an hour passed by without bringing in to them some reinforcement. The truth is, that nothing could exceed the spirit of determined resistance which seemed to animate the inhabitants of New England. So far from receiving us, as we had expected to be received, with open arms, they turned out to a man to oppose us, insomuch that General Gates

himself was in the end at a loss how to dispose of the multitudes of volunteers that flocked to his standard. It is very true that a countless proportion of these men knew nothing of parade movements; they were undrilled, unaccustomed to the duties of a soldier's life, and some of them destitute even of weapons; but they were, with few exceptions, men of robust frames and brave hearts, and of their skill in the use of fire-arms we had seen enough not to treat it lightly. At the head of this bold, though undisciplined band, the American General took post at a point which completely cut off all communication by the great road between Saratoga and Albany; and it became incumbent upon us, if we hoped to reach the former place, either to drive him by force from his advantageous ground, or by dexterity of manœuvre to turn him there, and to render his position untenable.

To execute one or other of these designs, General Burgoyne had under his orders little more than four thousand men. What with losses in the field, the garrisons left behind at the different forts and landing-places, and the escorts

required to guard such stores as were from time to time forwarded, our army had gradually diminished, till now it certainly did not exceed, if it came up to, the number just specified. But the worst of the matter was, that even this trifling force could not, in all its parts, be depended upon. I have said, that, from the hour when our rapid advance ceased and their hopes of plunder received a blight, the Indian warriors began gradually to quit us. There remained now scarcely one hundred Red men in the camp; and the Provincials and Canadians soon began to follow their example, deserting by whole sections every night. When we crossed the Hudson's, we carried with us something more than four hundred of these auxiliaries;—on the morning of the 19th, barely two hundred were with their colours; and before sunset on the 21st, scarcely fifty men could be found in a fit state to do duty. All this was bad enough,—bad, as it caused a serious diminution to our actual strength, and doubly bad, as it affected our *morale*, by diminishing the confidence of true men. Yet was the army in general far from despairing of suc-

cess. What alone it seemed to desire, was to be led at once against the enemy; and perhaps it is not going too far to affirm, that had that plan been adopted in proper time, it might have been productive of success.

By what principle General Burgoyne's proceedings were regulated, it is not for me to say. Unwilling to retreat, yet not daring to advance, he adopted that middle course which in perilous circumstances never fails to prove a bad one; and having pushed his columns within gun-shot of his enemy, he unfortunately halted. This was done upon a piece of ground certainly very favourable, as far as any halting-ground could be pronounced favourable in our circumstances; and the General lost no time in adding to the natural strength of his position, by throwing up such works as time and his means would allow. The main body encamped in a line almost parallel to that of the Americans, upon a range of hills called Bræmus's Heights, extending their left so far as to command the road and protect the batteaux; whilst on certain low grounds or meadows which lay between the river and the hill, the 47th British, the regiment

of Hesse Hanau, and the few Provincials who still adhered to us, took post. As our right was decidedly the weakest point in the line, upon it the greatest care was bestowed by the engineers. Here a redoubt, supported by breast-works and batteries, was erected, the care of guarding which was intrusted to a German brigade; whilst along the centre, and towards the left, we contented ourselves with throwing up a long mud wall, sufficiently thick to shelter the men against musketry, but hardly competent to resist the violence even of grape. Finally, a chain of outposts was pushed forward, about a quarter of a mile in front of the whole, which, winding round in a rearward direction, secured the right flank, and abundantly protected the lines from being turned. I am sure that I speak the sentiments of the whole army, when I affirm, that no man rejoiced in the appearance of security which these intrenchments created. We did not desire to act on the defensive; we were satisfied that to act thus was to throw away our only chance of success; and hence the erection of works gave us no satisfaction

whatever, inasmuch as it portended any thing rather than a bold and immediate advance.

In the construction of these fortifications several days were spent, during which few adventures befell worthy of repetition. On the 21st, indeed, a rumour got abroad, that a messenger from Sir Henry Clinton had arrived, and that he brought intelligence of the preparations which that officer was making to march in force to our relief. On more minute inquiry, I found that the rumour was well-founded. The man had succeeded, by dint of caution, in passing the American lines, taking care to conceal himself in the woods by day and to travel only by night; and he brought with him a communication in cypher, indicating that Fort Montgomery, on the Hudson's, would certainly be attacked on the 22nd at latest. This was, indeed, a cheering piece of news, to which General Burgoyne failed not to reply, sending back the same person with a correct statement of his own plight, and strongly urging the necessity of an immediate diversion; and at the same time two officers were despatched with

verbal communications to the same effect, and an assurance that he would certainly wait the issue, if he should find it practicable so to do, till the 12th of October. These, as well as many others, each of which took a separate route, fell, one after another, into the hands of the enemy; but of that fact we knew nothing at the time, and therefore I am only anticipating the events of my story.

CHAPTER X.

It is not necessary to give any minute detail of the manner in which our time was spent from the 20th of September, when first we assumed our present position, up to the 7th of October. Let it suffice to state, that whilst the ordinary routine of duty went on, whilst pickets were maintained, working-parties sent forth, and parades duly attended to, every day brought stronger and stronger proof that our situation was far from being a desirable one. In the first place, the weather, which had been heretofore tolerably serene, broke; and heavy rains, succeeded by sharp and cutting frosts, were our daily and nightly portion. In the next place, desertions became every hour more and more numerous; even the British soldiers

themselves being infected by the criminal inclination, and in too many instances yielding to it. Then, again, sickness was not wanting; agues, and intermittent fevers, began to make ravages in the ranks: whilst the scanty stock of provisions which we had brought across the Hudson's, melted daily away. To such a degree, indeed, were the stores diminished, that on the 3d, the General found it necessary to reduce the men's allowance; and we were thenceforth compelled to subsist upon two thirds, occasionally upon no more than one half, of the customary ration. Even with this, however, our misfortunes ended not. A thousand terrible rumours came in to distress us; and unfortunately, these proved, in very many instances, to be well founded.

The Americans, emboldened by our lengthened inactivity, suddenly began to turn the tables, and to assume the offensive in a manner to us the most alarming. They did not, indeed, sally from their lines to attack us in front, but they did what was infinitely more galling; they harassed our convoys, and threatened our communications. Not a morsel of food, nor a barrel

of powder could now be brought from the rear, except by dint of hard fighting on the part of the escorts; and of these not a few were cut off entirely, being waylaid and attacked by a force against which they could offer no adequate resistance. In the mean while, our very depôts themselves became exposed to insult, and our strongest forts were threatened. Passing several large detachments across the Hudson's, they attacked, almost at the same moment, the landing-place at Lake George, Mount Independence, Fort Edward, and Fort Anne; and so little had these attacks been anticipated, that several of them proved successful. By this means, our depôts, a large quantity of boats, many horses, oxen, and carriages, with some hundred men, fell into the enemy's hands; and we saw ourselves completely surrounded in a desert country, through which a way could be made, either to the front or rear, only by the sword.

Notwithstanding these numerous reverses, and the privations to which they gave birth, both the General and his troops continued to wait the issue of events with a degree of patience

altogether exemplary. The men performed their ordinary duties, if not with alacrity, at all events without complaining; and not a murmur was heard, except when the conversation happened to turn on the probable consequences of these indecisive measures. Among the officers of rank, however, a great deal of anxiety began to show itself. They met together frequently for the purposes of deliberation, some of them making no secret of their dissatisfaction; but the same unsteady course was pursued nevertheless, and the same policy persevered in. At last it became apparent to every one, that something decisive must be attempted before long. Our stock of provisions, which had never been very abundant, was now almost exhausted, and whence to receive a supply, no one could tell; whilst the latest hour at which we promised to abide Sir Thomas Clinton's movements, was at hand. It was accordingly surmised, that a retreat, or an advance, would be attempted immediately, and every hour gave to the supposition an increased degree of plausibility.

It might be about noon on the 7th of October, when the light troops, together with Gene-

ral Reidesdel's brigade, and a part of that of General Philips, received orders to form, and march to the right of the camp. The force thus put in motion amounted to barely fifteen hundred men, so cruelly were our numbers diminished by deaths and desertion; but upon what service it was about to be employed, none except the generals-in-chief seemed to be aware. That Burgoyne would risk an assault with a corps so inadequate, could not for a moment be imagined; yet the rest of the army was left within the lines, strict injunctions having been given that they should not quit their ground, unless expressly commanded to do so. I am aware that General Burgoyne in his public despatches has represented this manœuvre as one of reconnoissance merely. He was desirous, as he himself states, to ascertain whether the enemy's left could be turned, at the same time that he sufficiently guarded against any attack upon his own position; and it is but fair to believe, that the account of the matter which he has given, is correct. But whether it be so or not, of one thing I am quite certain, that we had scarcely cleared our intrenchments, when we assumed a

regular order of battle. Whilst Philips and Reidesdel, each at the head of a separate column, threatened the centre and left of the American lines, our brigade pushed off for the wood, with the design of penetrating, should it be found practicable, into their rear, and alarming them for their communications.

We had proceeded some way, without meeting an enemy, or suffering farther inconvenience than the natural inequalities of the ground presented, when our attention was forcibly drawn to the fate of our comrades by a heavy firing of muskets on the left. At first it was loose and irregular, as if the advanced parties had fallen in with the enemy's pickets, and were engaging them; but it became every moment more and more serious, till at last it increased into a roar. By and by, the same sounds were distinctly heard issuing from other quarters of the field, accompanied by repeated and quick discharges of artillery, till at last not a doubt could be harboured that the whole army was sharply engaged, not as assailants, but as defenders. Our commanding officer instantly called a halt.

To have continued his progress at a moment when the lines were threatened, would have been to expose himself to destruction, without causing any advantage to other divisions; so he determined to take ground to the left,—that he might at least ascertain how affairs were going, before he completely and irretrievably committed himself and his party.

A rapid march of half an hour's continuance brought us to a point, from which we could obtain a correct view of the condition in which affairs stood. At the extreme left of our works was a battalion of grenadiers, at the head of which was Major Ackland, upon which a fierce attack was made by a strong body of Continentals. By and by, a second corps of Americans threw itself against the Germans, who communicated between the grenadiers and the left of the line; whilst almost at the same time the line itself was not only assailed in front, but threatened by a moving column on its flank. To check the progress of that column, the Marksmen, with the light infantry that accompanied them, moved forward, and the 24th regiment coming up soon after, a fierce

contest began. Of the changes of ground which now took place, it were vain to attempt any accurate or minute account. All that I recollect of the matter is, that after sustaining a tremendous struggle, the left of our regular line gave way, and the light infantry were in consequence commanded to retreat, and to form again in a certain half-cleared field *en potence*. Here we were furiously assailed by Morgan's riflemen, one of the most distinguished regiments in the American service; but we held our ground stoutly, till General Fraser himself rode up, and again directed us to retire.

The truth is, that the enemy had by this time succeeded in overpowering both the right and centre of our columns; which falling back in disorder, left an open space to the Americans by which to enter the intrenched camp. General Fraser no sooner beheld how matters were going, than, quitting his own charge, he galloped off towards us, and joining us to the 24th regiment, which still retained its ranks, he led us briskly towards the point which was already all but won by the Rebels. We succeeded in getting there before them,

and drove them back from the very base of the parapet at the bayonet's point; but it was at the expense of one of the most valuable lives in this army, if not in the service at large. General Fraser had just enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing his skilful movement crowned with success, when a musket-ball pierced his side, and he fell mortally wounded into the arms of one of the men. He was instantly carried to the rear, leaving it as his last request, that we would on no account abandon the works, but defend them whilst a man remained alive, or a single cartridge continued in our pouches.

Nothing dismayed, though universally grieved at the fall of this gallant officer, our people continued to maintain themselves with so much obstinacy, that the enemy were at last fain to desist, and withdrew to the distance of about half a mile from our front. Unhappily, however, the same obstinate determination not to be forced, was not shown at every point in the line. A corps of Brunswickers, at the head of which was Colonel Breyman, being attacked in their intrenchments, gave way almost at the first fire; and though covered not only by a breast-

work, but by a row of stout palisades, they abandoned both, and fled in extreme confusion. The Americans were not slow in taking advantage of the panic. Desisting from farther efforts against the grenadiers, as well as against ourselves, they poured in great force through the opening thus made; and the wings of our army were in consequence themselves cut off from all communication one with another. Several attempts were indeed made to recover the lost ground. Colonel Breyman, rallying his Brunswickers, did his best to cheer them forward, and led them so far as to receive a well-directed volley from the Rebels; but that volley taking effect upon himself, as well as upon almost all the bravest of his officers, the regiment again broke, and no efforts of other leaders succeeded in restoring order.

It was, perhaps, a fortunate matter for us, at a juncture so critical as the present, that the increasing darkness compelled the enemy to refrain from following up their advantages. So complete was the confusion into which most of our regiments were thrown, that the consequences of another attack might have been fatal;

for besides that we had lost many of our best men and officers, the survivors were universally ignorant, not only of the fate of their comrades, but, I had almost said, of their own. That the Americans had carried our works, soon became generally understood; and as no one could tell where they had penetrated, or how far they had proceeded, no one rightly knew whether to regard himself in the light of a prisoner, or the reverse. Besides, the regiments were all broken and dispersed. Men were separated from their own officers, officers were separated from their own men; and whether those whom he could not discover in what he believed to be his proper place, were dead or alive, it was impossible for any individual to tell. When the firing ceased, we accordingly lay down, each man where he stood, without respect to persons; and of the fate which might await them when the morrow's sun arose, all were as ignorant, as many were perfectly indifferent.

Such was our condition (I speak at present of the little corps to which I was personally attached), when a messenger arrived from General Burgoyne, directing that we should change our

position, by a route which he was commissioned to point out. Our people stood instantly to their arms, and preserving a silence the most profound, passed rapidly, but in tolerable order, to the rear. By and by, we reached the stream, on the banks of which I had a few weeks ago sustained a skirmish; and crossing it by the bridge, we soon found that the army was in full retreat. But the retreat was not of long continuance. Having attained the height on which our camp formerly stood, we ascertained that there all the rest of the brigade had assembled; and piling our arms, we made ready to pass the night, in a frame of mind by no means such as need be envied.

Having nothing eatable in my havresack, nor any thing except water with which to quench my thirst, I had thrown myself down by the side of a fire, with the design of forgetting at once present troubles and future cares in sleep; when my kinsman Fraser, whom, since the Americans last withdrew, I had not seen, suddenly stood beside me. "You must rise," said he; "this is no time for repose, and the General has need of you." I rose instantly, and prepared to

accompany him. We walked on without exchanging a syllable, till we arrived at the identical house, where, after the action of the 19th, my poor friend expired; and on entering, I found that the scene which it presented on the present occasion, was not very different from that which it had presented then. Multitudes of wounded and dying men crowded every apartment, through the midst of whom we made our way, till we gained a low door at the extremity of a long passage, where we halted. The door was ajar, and Fraser pulling me softly by the sleeve, made a motion that I should look in. I did so, and beheld standing in the centre of a small room a group of persons whom I instantly recognized as Generals Burgoyne, Reidesdel, Philips, and Hamilton. A map was lying beside them on a table, which they appeared to examine with great anxiety; though no one spoke a word for several minutes. Fraser again made a signal to keep quiet; it was obeyed, and by and by the following deeply interesting conversation began.

"Then you persist in believing that he may yet arrive in time?" observed General Philips,

resuming, as it seemed, some topic which had been already discussed.

"Unquestionably," replied Burgoyne; "I cannot and will not believe, that Clinton is capable of violating his promise. He knows that our very existence depends upon the vigour of his movements; and rely upon it, that he will not be slow to succour us. We have nothing left for it but to maintain ourselves where we are a few days longer, and trust to his exertions for the rest."

General Philips, though evidently chagrined, only shrugged up his shoulders, and was silent; but the Baron Reidesdel taking up the discourse, exclaimed in broken English: "By Gar, General Burgoyne, if you go on thus, waiting and waiting, and doing noting, we shall all be cut to pieces, and den no man will be able to save us. Whatfor not go on, or go off at once?"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," answered Burgoyne in manifest agitation, "it is all very well for you, on whose heads no responsibility rests, to talk of acting with decision, and doing this or that on the spur of the moment. In God's name, how are we to retreat? in

God's name, how can we advance? Is not Gates before us with twelve thousand men, flushed with this day's success, and receiving hourly reinforcements? Are not the forts in our rear taken, the opposite bank of the river guarded, our bridge no longer secure, and our provisions expended? Will any of you tell me that this army, worn out with past exertions, and disspirited from defeat, is capable of acting on the offensive? Is it conceivable that, were we to commence a retrogression this moment, we should ever reach Canada? It is absolute madness to think of moving at all. Upon this ground must we conquer or die; at least we must maintain ourselves here, till Clinton come to deliver us."

The above was spoken with so much vehemence, that the rest of the generals saw the inutility of attempting a reply. They only looked at one another in silence; till at last, Hamilton renewed the conversation by asking, how it was proposed to make Sir Henry acquainted with the extreme peril of our situation. "You have despatched messenger after messenger," continued he, "not one of whom, as

far as we know, has ever reached his destination. Is it wise, or proper, to follow up a system, which, without bringing benefit upon the army at large, causes the destruction of so many individuals?"

"There is one resource left," replied Burgoyne, "to which, though I use it with reluctance, it has become necessary to have recourse. I do not think it will fail me; and if my expectations prove well-grounded, then are we safe."

"Name it!" exclaimed the generals in a breath.

"There, gentlemen, you must excuse me," replied Burgoyne. "In this instance, so much must depend upon the prudence of the agent, that it were unfair towards him to create additional difficulties, by extending my confidence to any besides himself."

"Then why are we here?" asked Philips angrily. "It is a mere mockery of a council of war, first of all to consult us, and then neither to adopt our sentiments, nor offer reasons for their rejection. For my own part, I wash my hands of all consequences, be they what they may!"

"I called you together, Sir," observed Burgoyne, "with no view whatever of seeking to share with you the responsibility which I alone must bear. Neither have I solicited your advice in any thing. I simply wished to make you acquainted with my own resolutions, and the causes which led to them. I consider it better, on every account, to abide the chances a few days longer, than to rush headlong upon certain destruction; for let me remind you, that a great deal more depends upon us than a mere regard to our own preservation. From the first, ours has been a force hazarded; circumstances may occur, to render its sacrifice essential. Are we not a subsidiary corps, and nothing else,—an army of diversion merely? Suppose, then, we did retire at once, and, though the matter is by no means probable, succeeded in reaching Canada, might not the safety of New York be compromised? No, no. Whilst the faintest hope of successful resistance continues, we must not permit Gates to detach a single man to re-inforce Washington;—therefore I say again, that nothing remains for us except to abide where we are, till

the effects of a plan, of the miscarriage of which I entertain little dread, be ascertained."

Whether the tone in which this was uttered, satisfied them that remonstrance was useless, or whether they were disgusted by the manner in which their advices had been received, I do not know; but Burgoyne no sooner ceased to speak, than his council withdrew. They retired through a door opposite to that behind which we were at standing; and they had no sooner done so, than we entered. The General started, but, recognising us instantly, held out his hand to my conductor, and exclaimed, "Ah, Fraser, how I rejoice to see you. You at least can feel for my situation: and what a situation it is! Without a hope of victory, with hardly a chance of escape, how am I to act, or where am I to turn? If I request advice or assistance from them, they cast in my teeth that my own indecision has brought about all these misfortunes; yet not one among them had the candour to speak out, when my proceedings were, what they are now pleased to term, dilatory, and my councils wavering. And even now, God alone can tell whether I act rightly. Per-

haps I ought to regard the matter as hopeless, and retreat at once, whilst yet there is a chance of finding the bridge entire, and the opposite bank unoccupied."

"I am afraid, Sir," replied Fraser, "that you have already gone too far to recede. To-night, no movement either to the front or rear could be made, without sacrificing your wounded, and abandoning all your stores; and to-morrow, if the enemy be the men that I take them for, we shall have other work upon our hands. Permit me to add likewise, that this is no time for indecision. You have just declared to the Generals your determination of abiding the result where you are; you must not supply them with an additional handle against you, by revoking that determination, at least immediately."

"Then you overheard our deliberations?" asked the General.

"In part I did," replied Fraser, "though only in part."

"I am glad of it," exclaimed Burgoyne; "for you, at least, will do me justice, let the result be what it may. You can testify how cruelly I have been thwarted, how barbarously brow-

beaten, at a moment when above all others unity of councils was required. Oh, Fraser, if you value your own peace of mind, never listen to the whispers of ambition. No man can tell the miseries of command, till he has experienced them,—no man."

"But your plan, Sir," said Fraser, interrupting him, and anxious, as far as might be, to conceal his agitation from me: "it is high time to think of that; and here is your messenger, ready and willing to execute your orders, or perish in the attempt."

"True, true," said the General, "I had forgotten that. If it succeed, we may yet escape the toils;—but that *if*, Fraser!"

"It must succeed," exclaimed Fraser, "it cannot fail of success, provided only it be acted upon immediately. But there ought to be no farther wavering—let the young man receive his instructions, and set forth on the instant."

The General paused, as if to consider this proposal, the varying expression of his countenance bearing testimony to the wavering nature of his thoughts. "The plan must be followed up," said he at length, "but not with unneces-

sary precipitation. Mr. Macdirk must pass over under the eyes of both armies, and that can be done only in the day. It were madness, moreover, to set out upon so critical an adventure till the position of the enemy's posts has been ascertained; and the delay of one day more can do no great harm. Besides, the Americans may think fit to offer us battle again to-morrow, and success on our parts would render the step altogether unnecessary. Not a word, Fraser," continued he, observing that my relative was preparing to remonstrate; "my mind is fully made up; he shall not set out to-night. And now, gentlemen, to supper. Whatever my stock affords shall be laid before you; for myself, I must go forth and see how matters proceed in the camp."

The General waited not for a reply, but immediately withdrew.

"There goes as good and as brave, and withal as ambitious a man," exclaimed Fraser, "as any in the British army; yet no more fit to hold a separate command than the meanest sentinel who serves under him. That he possesses talent of a high order, all the world knows:—he is eloquent, humane, and as a se-

cond unrivalled ; but responsibility is a load under which he cannot bear up, and hence all his natural abilities go for nothing. What a career of glory was before him, had he possessed nerve enough to follow it up; and now God grant that both he and his army become not in the end, objects of compassion to their friends, and of triumph to their enemies! But let us adjourn to my tent. I know that the poor man fares as hardly as any soldier in the line; there is something left behind, I believe, in my canteen—let us consume that, and spare his scanty stock." He turned as he spoke towards the door, and I followed him with the intention of being his guest for the night, both at bed and board.

CHAPTER XI.

We had arrived at the entrance-hall, and were preparing to quit the house, when the sound of female voices, one in evident distress, arrested our attention. We paused, irresolute whether to enter the chamber from which the weeping proceeded, or to pass on at once to Fraser's quarters, when the door was suddenly opened, and the Baroness Reidesdel presented herself. She instantly recognised Fraser, and begged him, "for God's sake, to come in;—for I am in a sad plight," continued she. "Here is poor General Fraser dying in one corner of my room, and Lady Harriet Ackland frantic for the loss of her husband in another; besides a number of unfortunate gentlemen, all more or less severely wounded, thrown

in a great measure upon my attentions. There was no resisting this appeal; so we followed our conductress, to become witnesses of a scene the recollection of which is not likely ever to pass from my memory.

In a small chamber, the earthen floor of which was but scantily covered with straw, lay seven officers, two of whom, the German Colonel Breyman, and our own gallant brigadier, were already in the agonies of death. The Colonel, whose wound was in the head, appeared to suffer no pain; a heavy breathing alone, with an occasional quiver of the lip, giving testimony that life had not departed; the General groaned audibly, like one in acute torture; and spoke from time to time with the strong voice of a man whose sufferings promised to endure many hours, though death must in the end remove them. He had received a musket ball in the side, which passed completely through the body, rupturing the stomach in its progress; and he now lingered on, a martyr to pangs as violent as such a wound was calculated to produce. Nearly opposite to him sat, or rather reclined, Lady Harriet Ackland,

on one end of a couch, her face buried in her handkerchief, and sobbing audibly; whilst the Baroness Reidesdel's children were lying, like seraphs in the midst of carnage, sound asleep upon the other. Major Ackland, it appeared, had been wounded in the late action, as common rumour reported, mortally: at all events he had fallen into the hands of the Americans, and was now a prisoner. It would be hard to determine which of these persons appeared to me most deserving of compassion. The wounded men were, doubtless, suffering, many of them, all that the body can endure of torture; but Lady Harriet's was an agony of mind, in comparison of which the most acute bodily pain were trifling.

"I must go to him," cried she; "wherever he is, and whatever his fate may be, I must share it. The Rebels cannot be so inhuman as to refuse permission to a miserable wife, to attend the bed of her dying husband. Oh, God, that I could but see him!—one word, one look of his, would be to me a consolation the most unspeakable."

It was in vain that the Baroness used every

soothing and consolatory expression which a compassionate heart could dictate, appealing to us, as to persons well acquainted with the truth, to confirm her assurances of the Major's safety. Like Rachel weeping for her children, Lady Harriet refused to be comforted; and though we were not scrupulous in passing the rigid line of truth in a cause so holy, even our asseverations were thrown away upon her. Every moment during which she was absent from her wounded husband seemed an age; and at last it was agreed upon amongst us, that to offer farther opposition would be useless. Though extremely delicate at the best, and at present far advanced in a state of pregnancy, she determined to brave all the hazards of the night, and the enemy; and, throwing a loose cloak about her shoulders, to make her way, as she best could, within the American lines. One consideration, and one only, induced her to pause for a few moments. It was suggested that a letter of recommendation from General Burgoyne to General Gates would at least secure for her civil treatment at the outposts; and as Fraser volun-

teered to procure that letter, she consented to remain where she was till he should return.

Whilst the unhappy lady sat in a state of comparative calmness, the attention of all present was painfully turned to General Fraser, who retained even to the last moment the feeling of the soldier and the gentleman. Though racked with bodily pain, he looked up from time to time only to express his sorrow that he should thus intrude upon the Baroness, and his sense of her extreme kindness; and then his thoughts seemed to wander to other scenes, and the name of his wife rose, as it were, involuntarily to his lips. "Oh, fatal ambition!" cried he, "of how much happiness hast thou robbed me! Alas! my poor wife,—who will comfort her when she hears of this?—and my children, —God, be thou their guardian! To thee, and to my country I commend them." Then suddenly changing his theme, he exclaimed: "Poor Burgoyne! tell him that I felt for him even in my dying moments; and say, that I made it my last request to be buried at six o'clock in the evening, in the redoubt which crowns the

hill on our right. It is a foolish wish; but I fancy that I shall sleep soundly there, because my brave fellows built it, and will, I am sure, maintain it." All this was spoken calmly, resolutely, and in the tone of one aware of his situation; and if there occasionally broke from him some hasty expression, no one could doubt that reason enfeebled by bodily pain gave birth to it. Poor fellow! he lingered on till eight o'clock in the morning, and then fell asleep.

In the mean while, Fraser had not been neglectful of the charge assigned to him, nor Burgoyne backward in furnishing the letter of recommendation to the American General. The former returned in as short a space as could have been expected, with the document in question; but the lady's grief again assumed the most distressing appearance, when he assured her that to pass the line of advanced sentries this night was impracticable. The safety of the whole army required, that for the present no intelligence of its change of ground should reach the Americans; and hence the most positive orders had been issued, that no one, on

any pretence whatever, should quit the camp. As there was manifest reason in this, even Lady Harriet, as soon as the first burst of disappointment passed by, could not refuse to see it; and she strove from that moment not only to moderate her own grief, but to assist in alleviating the sorrows of her mutilated acquaintances.

Of the issue of this lady's interesting story, a few words will suffice to remind you. Having waited with exemplary patience till a late hour on the following day, she was forwarded with a flag of truce, and embarking in an open boat rowed by two common sailors, proceeded down the river. Torrents of rain descended, from which alone, under other circumstances, she would have shrunk; but at present her whole soul was engrossed by one idea only, and she pushed on, reaching the point of her destination at ten o'clock at night. Fortunately for her, the American outpost in front of which she presented herself, was commanded by a brave and generous officer, Major Dearborn; who received her with all the deference due to her rank, and furnished her with such accommo-

dations as his hut afforded. She remained there till the morrow, her anxiety being in some degree relieved by his assurances that her husband's wounds were not serious; and she finally reached the American head-quarters in safety, where the utmost kindness was shown to her. I need scarcely add, that the flattering accounts which she received of Major Ackland's condition, proved to be well-founded. He had been shot through both legs, but was doing well; and he returned with his amiable and heroic wife to England, as soon as the army of which he formed a part, obtained its liberty. But to return to my own narrative.

Having spent some hours with the Baroness Reidesdel, and done our best to comfort both her and those about her, Fraser and myself adjourned to our original place of destination, the tent of the former. It was but a cheerless habitation, destitute of every thing which the common world calls comforts; yet we entered it with a feeling not greatly removed from satisfaction, inasmuch as we found in it at least a place of temporary refuge from scenes harrowing to the best feelings of our nature. "This

is a cold welcome, Macdirk," said Fraser; "yet it is the best that I can give. I believe there still remains a morsel or two of salt junk, with a pint of rum, or thereabouts; and since we cannot command better, why we must be content with what we have." So saying, he ordered his servant to produce the viands; and though they were coarse enough, Heaven knows, and far from being superabundant, we were too thankful for any means of allaying the cravings of hunger, to experience or express the slightest dissatisfaction with our fare.

Our scanty meal being finished, we naturally entered into conversation touching the state of the army, and the prospects both of it in general, and of ourselves in particular. "Perilous as your undertaking is," observed my companion, "I am by no means sure, that it is not, after all, an enviable one. It is true, that you run some risks. A single imprudent act or hasty expression will betray you, and in that case your death is unavoidable. But your imprudence must be extreme indeed, if it lead to this; and then, should you succeed, how great will be your reward! On our side, again, what

is there to cheer or enliven? Twice foiled in action, destitute of provisions, stores, and resources, harassed on all sides by flying bodies of the enemy, and commanded by men who know not their own minds for an hour; to what can we look forward, except to fresh disasters, and in the end perhaps to a shameful capitulation? Even your mission, on which I have hitherto counted so much, will, I am satisfied, lead to nothing. No, no, the happy moment has escaped us, and no exertions, however spirited, can now bring it back."

"Then why not say so to the General at once?" asked I.

"Because such an opinion coming from me, would deprive him of all self-command. Besides, things may fall out in our favour, of which we dream not at present; and whilst the shadow of a chance remains, Burgoyne must be supported."

"And supported at the expense of my honour, certainly," said I,—"perhaps of my life."

"Your honour runs no risk," replied he, "whilst you act in obedience to your chief's

orders;—your life, as I have already observed, is in your own keeping."

"But why pursue this wild scheme, if things really be, as you represent them, hopeless? Why not try what an Indian can do? nay more, why not allow me an Indian for my guide? and I will set off cheerfully on the instant. It is to the pretended desertion, and to it alone, that I object."

"Will your objections cease to operate, if I lay before you convincing proofs that there is not an Indian attached to the army, who is not a traitor?"

I replied, that such a conviction would certainly go far towards allaying my scruples, and reconciling me to any thing.

"Then your scruples will not long torment you," said he. "You have observed a remarkable warrior in the General's suite,—one Eagleswing, as he calls himself, a chief of the Six Nations."

I recollected him perfectly; indeed, it was impossible, having seen that man once, ever after to forget him. Among a people cele-

brated for the exact symmetry of their persons, Eagleswing deserved to be pronounced positively handsome. Tall, graceful, formed for feats both of agility and strength, he possessed a countenance endowed with an expression of singular acuteness, and an eye which, whilst it shunned the gaze of the individual on whom it was turned, seemed to read his very thoughts, and penetrate his most secret wishes. From the opening of the campaign, he had attached himself, in a remarkable manner, to the person of the General, to whose interests he professed, and indeed appeared to be devoted; and his influence among his countrymen being allowed to be very great, the General scrupled not to bestow upon him a large portion of his confidence. Of this no secret was made; indeed, the General himself spoke openly of the Indian as one of the most useful functionaries in the army. But there were not wanting persons who viewed the Red Warrior with an eye of strong suspicion; and now for the first time I learned, that my relative was of the number.

"Are you aware," continued he, "that all

our messengers, not one of whom has succeeded, went under the guidance of an Indian, recommended by that person? This may amount to no charge against him, I allow; yet, is it not singular, that our plans should have been so aptly frustrated this morning? I know that Eagleswing was made acquainted with them."

"What you say," replied I, "affords strong ground of suspicion, doubtless; but suspicion is not proof. You promised me proof of the Indian's treachery—let me have it."

"On more accounts than one, I will at least make the attempt," replied he. "Take this rifle," handing me at the same time a short fusee, and arming himself with another. "Your dirk is, I see, in your belt; now follow, and do as I do, without asking a question."

He rose as he spoke, and we sallied from the tent.

I was at no loss to conjecture that our expedition was both a secret and a hazardous one; nor did any great space of time elapse ere I discovered its object. Instead of pass-

ing openly through the camp, or along the line of advanced sentries, we struck off directly towards the rear, till we had passed head-quarter house, when we turned suddenly to the right, and made for the point where the Indian huts were established. As we approached these, a double share of caution became necessary. Though it is not customary among the savages to preserve a regular watch in their encampments, I need scarcely say, that he who seeks to traverse them unobserved, must adopt every imaginable expedient to shun observation; for their acuteness of sense surpasses every thing of which a European can form a conception, and the slightest noise is almost sure to be overheard. With the habits of Indians, however, Fraser was familiarly acquainted. He squatted down as soon as he had arrived within a certain distance of their tents, making a motion to me to follow his example; and our approaches were thenceforth made slowly, silently, and painfully, not upon our hands and knees, but upon our bellies. In this manner we dragged ourselves over the surface of

the ground at a rate so tardy, as to be ourselves scarcely aware that we made any progress, till we reached the exterior of a tent, detached from the rest, within which it was easy to perceive that several persons were assembled. Fraser touched my arm, as a signal to keep perfectly still, but to be ready for all chances; and then gently raising one corner of the canvass, all that was within became, in a moment, perceptible.

We saw before us a group of five or six savages, conspicuous among whom was Burgoyne's confidant. They were seated round a dull fire, smoking with all the composure for which the Red men are remarkable; and for many minutes after we had attained our stations, a profound silence reigned among them. At last Eagles-wing spoke. As he addressed his companions in the language of his tribe, his speech was to me without meaning; but I could perceive from the involuntary pressure of my companion's elbow against my side, that he perfectly understood it. Well pleased with this, I lay quite still, looking with intense interest at the scene before me; and truly it were not easy

to conceive one more remarkable, or more worthy of a master's pencil to represent it. The persons before us were all bedizened with the war-paint, which gave to their naturally savage countenances an expression absolutely ferocious. A loose cotton scarf, thrown carelessly over one shoulder, and twisted round the loins, so as to cover half the upper limb, formed the only garment which sheltered them from the influence of weather; for the mocassins, in which their feet and ankles were wrapped, were intended rather to shield them in the rough passes of the forests, than to protect them from cold or wet. Their heads, again, bald except at the crown, were left wholly exposed, except that a bunch of feathers barbarously surmounted the knot of long lank hair in which they prided themselves. They sat upon the ground, each man's tomahawk and rifle laid carefully beside him, and their attitude was illustrative at once of extreme indolence, and the capability of assuming in a moment its very opposite. A profound silence reigned whilst Eagleswing spoke, the pipes being laid aside that nothing

might call off attention; and when he concluded, an obscure sound, resembling rather the snort of a horse than any thing else in nature, gave assurance that his address had been well received. This was hint enough to Fraser. Once more he pressed against my side with his elbow; and letting the curtain fall gently, began to steal silently to the rear. I followed his example in the same manner in which he set it, and in a few moments we were sufficiently removed from the hut to permit his speaking.

"Thank God! Macdirk," said he in a low whisper, "that we took this precaution. There is no room for explanation now; but follow me, and whatever you see me attack, be sure to aid me in destroying it. The scoundrel shall be taken in his own snare, or I am not the man I used to be."

Without waiting for a reply, Fraser set off at a rapid pace; and I kept up with him, surprise itself being scarcely allowed to operate, so abrupt and unaccountable seemed to me the whole series of operations.

A few minutes' walk brought us to an open

thicket, considerably in advance of the camp, and, as the light of the stars enabled me to distinguish, above half musket-shot from the right flank of the redoubt. At the edge of the thicket stood a sentry, who challenged as we approached; but Fraser instantly squatting, caused me to do the same, and we lay motionless, and almost breathless for several seconds. By and by the man, whose attention had evidently been attracted, began to relax from his attitude of watchfulness. Casting a careful glance around, and seeing nothing, he once more shouldered his arms, and turning to his left, began to walk backwards and forwards, as he had previously done, on his post. We took care not to neglect the opportunity thus furnished. Advancing in the same quiet way in which we had approached the Indians' tent, we succeeded, after sundry pauses, in gaining the wood; and diverging as near to the soldier as prudence would allow, we lay down,—why, or for what purpose, I knew not.

We had maintained this attitude rather more than half an hour,—on my part in a state of

mute astonishment, on the part of Fraser in breathless anxiety,—when the attention of both was suddenly drawn to the rear, by a low, confused, and most unearthly noise. That which roused us was not lost upon the sentry, who did as he had done when we were approaching. He halted, and challenged; but in the present instance he appeared even more speedily satisfied than formerly, for almost immediately after he resumed his walk. It was now our turn to be on the alert, and we were so. We looked abroad, and beheld a huge bear, moving slowly along the skirt of the thicket, and edging, as it were, by degrees and in short circles towards the soldier. At this instant Fraser pulled me by the coat, as if desirous that I should be prepared to act. Now the bear stood still, and now the sentinel in the ordinary course of his beat approached it, when my companion slowly unsheathed his hunting-knife, and gathered himself up for a spring. I had no time to form so much as a guess respecting his design, when all at once he rushed from his ambuscade, and the next instant was engaged in a close and desperate

struggle with the animal whose extraordinary movements we had been watching. It was speedily ended. Before I could arrive to his assistance, he pierced the monster with many stabs, which, uttering a shrill cry, fell dead at his feet, and displayed the figure, not of a real bear, but of an Indian artfully disguised in the skin of a less savage animal. You will readily believe that my astonishment at this discovery was great, whilst the amazement of the sentry, who immediately recognised his officer, was not less so; but the secret was soon disclosed, and it proved to be one of the first importance.

For some time back, such of our sentinels as occupied detached and lonely stations, had been observed to disappear in a very unaccountable manner. That the men had not deserted, we had the evidence, in many cases, of their own excellent characters, in all of the positions of their posts, for believing. It was not in our advanced chain that this occurred, from which, if desertion were the object, it might most easily be attained; but invariably in solitary spots; usually in the rear, or on

the flank of the camp, and always within the compass of our own ground. Numerous were the efforts made to account for the circumstance, all of which had hitherto proved unavailing. If two men mounted together, nothing of the kind occurred; if a patrol lay up in ambush, they discovered nothing, except occasionally a bear prowling near them; but as sure as one man took upon himself the duty, so sure was he never to return. This happened so frequently, that at last men became timid of mounting; nor could any but the bravest and best soldiers be persuaded to face a danger which they believed to be supernatural.

Our adventure this night unravelled the whole mystery. This bear, which had been seen so frequently, proved to be one of Eagleswing's followers, by whose tomahawk man after man had fallen; and who, but for our opportune visit to the tent of his chief, might have pursued his bloody career to the close of the campaign.

"I told you," said Fraser to me, "that there was not an Indian in the camp who would be found, on examination, honest in

any particular; and here is proof enough that I was not mistaken; but this is not all. Let us first cast this carrion where its companions may not be likely to find it, and then, as we return home, I will convince you, that if the army is to be saved at all, it must be saved by you."

As he spoke, we seized the Indian by the legs, and, the sentinel lending his assistance, we soon dragged him into a close part of the thicket. That done, we left the man to his meditations, and following a course as tortuous as that which we had pursued in setting out, we arrived in due time, and in perfect safety, at the tent.

Of the conversation which followed, a few words will suffice to make you acquainted with the substance. The speech which we had overheard, and which was the cause of our extraordinary movements, contained, it appeared, nothing more than hints of some deep-laid scheme of treachery, the full object of which, Fraser had been unable to discover, but to which the murder of the sentry, and the passage of the scout to the enemy's camp, were to be the preludes.

"And now," continued he, "as you professed your readiness to desert in the event of these men being found unfaithful, it remains for me only to hold you to your promise. For once, I believe that Burgoyne has acted prudently. I could not gather that the Red-skins know any thing of this device, and therefore we may rest tolerably secure, that it will not be thwarted; though every thing will depend upon yourself. But it is high time to think of seeking repose. To you, and probably to me, to-morrow will be a day of no common exertion; it were a pity to enter upon it with minds and bodies enfeebled by too much watchfulness."

He drew his cloak around him as he spoke, and with as much coolness as if nothing out of the ordinary routine of events had occurred, threw himself at length upon the ground. Though in no degree affected by the drowsiness of which he complained, I instinctively followed his example; and in a few minutes a heavy breathing convinced me that he was in a state of absolute forgetfulness.

CHAPTER XII.

BEING now left entirely to my own reflections, you will not be surprised to learn, that these gradually assumed a character, which, in spite of a strong sense of bodily fatigue, effectually hindered sleep from visiting my eyelids. It appeared to me as if the events of the past day, more particularly the occurrences of the last hour, were the mere creatures of a disordered fancy—dreams worked out in the fever of a morning's sleep, not realities involving the most important future consequences. The scene in the hospital, the countenance of Eagleswing, the assembly of savages, with the subsequent deed of blood, all forced themselves in the most grotesque and hideous manner back upon my recollection, till I almost doubted whether I

were not even now in a trance, from which it would be a relief of no ordinary kind to awake. Then, again, the thought of what to-morrow might bring forth, was not without its influence. I felt myself pledged to an undertaking than which I well knew that none could be devised more hazardous; and there were moments when my resolution wavered, almost to sinking, under the prospect. More than once I was tempted to repair to the General's quarters for the purpose of retracting the consent which I had given. But the recollection that my honour was engaged, that my future prospects depended on myself, and that a shrinking back now, would effectually ruin them for ever, these considerations served again to steel me. Wearied out at length by so many distracting considerations, I determined to think no more; and I closed my eyes firmly together, as if the shutting out of all external objects would assist in dispersing a host of painful ideas. But my efforts proving useless, I ceased to make them, and rising in a sort of desperation walked forth.

The night, which had hitherto been calm

and clear, began now to assume a lowering and threatening appearance. Dark clouds were gathering in the sky, and a low moaning of wind, the prelude to a storm, came up sullenly and hoarsely from the south. I cannot tell why these circumstances should have produced the smallest effect upon me; but certain it is, that I experienced a positive relief from them. It appeared as if the tumult in my own mind had unfitted me from looking upon outward nature, except in a state of uproar; and as the wind became every moment more and more boisterous, my agitation gradually subsided. I walked about for a full hour watching the progress of the storm; and I retired at last to enjoy a sound and refreshing slumber, which the rushing of a heavy rain, and the boisterous roar of a tempest contributed largely to produce.

Though the storm continued to rage with unabated fury, the troops, as is customary in such situations, got under arms an hour before dawn; but instead of returning to the line as soon as the day broke, they merely piled their arms, and continued on the watch. The truth

is, that the enemy no sooner ascertained the evacuation of our more advanced camp, than they possessed themselves of it; pushing forward parties within musket-shot of our new alignement, between which and our pickets, as well as between several batteries on each side, an irregular fire of musketry and cannon ensued. For what purpose this desultory tiraillade was kept up, it would be hard to say. On our parts, indeed, it was merely a measure of defence; for our men never fired till compelled to do so by the audacity of their assailants, and ceased again as soon as the latter withdrew; but the Americans persisted all day in drawing on useless skirmishes, which cost a few valuable lives both to themselves and us, without producing any important result. Towards evening, however, both parties appeared to grow weary of so unprofitable a waste of ammunition. The enemy, having vainly striven to drive in a post which General Burgoyne exhibited a firm determination to maintain, all at once ceased their hostilities; and from that hour till after nightfall, no firing beyond a distant and random cannonade took place.

Things were in this state when Burgoyne, to whom the last wish of General Fraser had been communicated, issued orders for the assembling of a party to carry that wish into execution. As it was a matter of some moment not to attract greater notice from the Americans than might be, the troops provided for the melancholy ceremony were few in number; Fraser's Marksmen only, with a few companies of light infantry, being employed on that service. We began to muster about half-past five, at the door of the house where the gallant brigadier lay; and in a quarter of an hour after, his body, wrapped up in a sheet, and covered with a horseman's cloak, was brought out upon a rude bier constructed for the purpose. Four Serjeant-majors belonging to his own division, were the bearers, whose moistened eyes and dejected countenances gave testimony to the sorrow that reigned within; and the mourners were Generals Burgoyne, Philips, Reidesdel, and Hamilton, with many others of the highest rank attached to the army. As soon as the body appeared, the word was given to move;

and a slow and mournful procession began, a few muffled drums beating the dead march, and an occasional low flourish of trumpets sounding, till, having gained the base of the hill, on the summit of which the redoubt stood, the troops opened by sign to the right and left, and the bier with its attendants went forward. At the head of this party walked Mr. Brudenel, the respectable Chaplain General of the army, who faltered forth in a broken voice the words "I am the resurrection and the life," till having reached the point where the grave had been dug, a general halt took place. Nothing could exceed at this moment the mournful solemnity of the scene. In the midst of a furious tempest of wind and rain, and surrounded by men whom he had often led to victory, was the gallant Fraser committed to the dust; and as if these accompaniments alone had not been sufficiently impressive for the occasion, another was speedily granted. The enemy, who had planted a battery upon a height immediately opposite to the redoubt, ignorant, no doubt, of the cause of the assembly, no sooner beheld a

crowd of persons together, than they opened a heavy fire upon us. The balls struck repeatedly into the mound of soil at the edge of the grave, casting dirt into the faces both of the clergyman and his auditors, whilst the wild whistling of the gale replied in melancholy cadence to the roar of the cannon which played upon us. Strange to say, however, not a man received an injury. The service was concluded, the earth piled upon the deceased, and the customary volley having been fired, the procession returned to its place of muster in the same order which it preserved when advancing.

By the time we regained the little area in front of the hospital, the sun had set, and the last rays of twilight were rapidly departing. The storm, however, continued to rage with unabated fury; and an occasional peal of thunder, so distant as to be with difficulty distinguished from a gust of wind, seemed to threaten that as yet it had by no means reached its height. In the midst of this terrible strife of the elements a variety of circumstances took place, indicative of some projected change in the situation of

the army. Multitudes of cars and horses, all of them loaded with baggage, began to assemble in rear of the camp; the heaviest of the guns were quietly withdrawn from position, and several cases of ammunition being broken open, a distribution was made to the quarter-masters of the various corps. By and by such of the sick and wounded as were in a condition to travel, were placed, with little regard to comfort, upon waggons, whilst the women and children were collected together, and directed to accompany the hospital. These things were yet in progress when a brigade of heavy infantry wound slowly past, taking the road which leads to Fishkill and Saratoga,—immediately in rear of which, baggage, heavy artillery, sick, wounded, and women, began their confused but silent march.

I was contemplating these movements with an eye of no common interest, when a Serjeant called away my attention to other matters, by reminding me that the Marksmen were ordered to relieve one of the outposts, on the left of the line, and close to the river. The latter corps had already assembled for the purpose,

and I joined it just as it was preparing to move from its ground. There was nothing beyond the ordinary routine of duty in the events which immediately followed. We traversed the camp, every corner of which seemed in a state of active bustle, and reached our station in safety, of which we took possession with all the form, or rather with the absence of all form, which characterises such proceedings; and our sentries being planted, Fraser and myself sat down beside a little watch-fire, apart from the men.

It was now, after having carefully ascertained that no curious ears were by, that my kinsman began to concert with me the more minute details of our project. He assured me that the moment for carrying it into execution had at length arrived; that farther delay would render it, even if successful, of no avail; and that the facilities afforded by our present situation of accomplishing one great point in it might not occur again. Finally, he put into my hand a piece of dirty paper, covered with such scrawls as children usually produce, as my letter of commendation to General Clinton,

and urged me with great vehemence to desert on the instant. I could not hold out against his persuasions: I consented, and having done this, it was no hard matter to prevail upon me to make the act of desertion as palpable as possible. The following is the method which was adopted for that purpose.

About midnight, or perhaps half an hour before, it fell to my turn to visit the sentries. I had risen from beside the fire, and was already advanced some paces on my progress, when Fraser called me back, and speaking loudly, so as to be overheard by the men, desired that a patrol should accompany me. To this I objected as useless; but on his urging the matter warmly, and recommending that a reconnoissance be made to the front, I consented, though with much apparent reluctance. The consequence was, that a corporal with four privates became my companions, as they were afterwards zealous witnesses to my treachery. It was not a very hard matter to deceive these honest fellows. Perfectly unsuspicious of any sinister design, and accustomed to pay implicit obedience to their superiors, they were easily

directed to act so as to serve the great object in view, without greatly endangering my personal safety. I led them just beyond the line of videttes; when, pretending that it would be more prudent to feel our way singly, I caused them to separate. This done, we all advanced, when, gradually drawing near the corporal, I began to tamper with him, as if desirous of making him a companion in my flight. For a while, the man either did not or would not understand me; he answered vaguely and confusedly, sometimes not appearing to see through my design at all, at others treating my proposals as a joke. At last I told him plainly, that I intended to abide by a ruined army no longer; our cause was a falling one—there was nothing to be gained by farther adherence to it, every thing by adopting an opposite policy. The poor fellow stopped on hearing this declaration, and asked whether I were really serious: "Never more so in my life," answered I. "I am so far on my way towards the American lines, and I invite you to accompany me."

"Not if a captain's commission were my

reward," answered the brave man; "nor shall you pass, if I have the power to prevent it!"

I had anticipated this, and, before he could bring his rifle to the present, I seized and endeavoured to wrest it from him. A brief struggle ensued, during which the piece exploded; and as I knew that the report would bring the patrol instantly upon me, I relinquished my hold and fled. The corporal pursued, shouting loudly to his comrades; but as I was more lightly equipped, as well as fleeter of foot, I speedily left him behind; and the excessive darkness favouring me, I was soon beyond the reach of capture. Several shots were indeed fired, the balls from which flew very wide of their mark; and in ten minutes after the final arrangement of my plan, I was to all intents and purposes a deserter.

Animated by the good fortune which had so far attended me, I pressed forward in better spirits, and with higher hopes of ultimate success than I had yet ventured to encourage. Not that I was yet free from hazard; there was at least as much danger of falling by the

hands of the enemy's patrols, as there had been from our own: nevertheless I felt confident that no calamity would befall me; and I was not deceived. A short walk of little more than a mile, brought me in front of a Rebel outpost. I was challenged as a matter of course. I answered as the predicament in which I stood, directed; and it having been ascertained that I was alone, permission was given me to advance. I did so, and for the first time in my life, found myself amidst a group of persons, every one of whom naturally looked upon me with an eye of suspicion.

The treatment of deserters is, in all armies, and under all circumstances, pretty much the same. The officer in command of the outpost having deprived me of my arms, and satisfied his own curiosity as to the corps to which I had belonged, the state of the British army, and the motives which led to my abandoning it, despatched me under an escort to the field-officer of the night; who, after compelling me to go again through the same ordeal, gave orders that I should be conducted without delay into the presence of

General Gates. I was accordingly led over ground, with every foot of which I was but too well acquainted, though the arrangements introduced upon it were, indeed, very different from those which I had previously witnessed. The enemy now occupied the site of the encampment from which we had been compelled to retire on the 7th. Instead, however, of a scanty line of tents, barely sufficing to maintain a loose communication from flank to flank, I beheld the whole surface of the country swarming with troops; whilst wigwams, blanket-huts, marquees, and other temporary domiciles, were every where huddled together in close and disorderly confusion. Hundreds of fires, likewise, were blazing, round which many companies, apparently destitute of shelter, were reposing. Guns, tumbrils, ammunition carts, and other carriages, blocked up every avenue; and the neighing of horses sounded from all quarters, as if these animals had been extremely abundant. It would have been a striking spectacle at any time, no matter how the individual might be circumstanced that looked upon it; but to me it possessed a more

than ordinary interest. I could not but painfully contrast the strength of the enemy with our weakness, as I passed, not without difficulty, from lane to lane; and I arrived at last in front of a spreading marquee, perfectly satisfied that even Sir Henry Clinton's diversion, if made at all, would hardly serve to deliver Burgoyne from the ruin that hung over him.

The tent towards which our steps were turned, stood considerably apart from all others, and occupied the orchard from which the light troops had retired previous to the assault upon our lines late in the evening of the 7th. At no great distance from it, though far enough removed to hinder a conversation from being overheard, sat a band of some ten or twelve dismounted troopers, smoking and chatting beside a large fire, the horses being picketed close beside them; whilst three sentinels patrolled backwards and forwards on all sides of it, so as to hinder any persons from approaching till they should have been previously examined. By these we were, of course, stopped; but my guide having explained his business, the serjeant was called, and we were

conducted to the guard's station, where we sat down. Nor, to say the truth, was the pause thus granted by any means unacceptable. I was well aware that, in order to effect my proper object, it would be necessary to impose upon General Gates a story somewhat different from that which had amused his subordinates; and though I had pretty well arranged beforehand all that I intended to say, still the prospect of a few moments to collect my thoughts appeared far from being unpleasant. But it is no easy matter, under any circumstances, to obtain leisure for thinking in the company of North Americans; nor was I more favoured in this respect than others. Endless questions were put to me, all of which I found it necessary to answer, till at last the return of the messenger, who had gone to make the General acquainted with my arrival, was looked forward to as a positive relief from immediate vexations.

No great space of time elapsed ere he arrived, bringing with him an order for my introduction into the presence. This was speedily obeyed; and I found myself the next

minute standing in the heart of our enemy's camp, face to face with the officer commanding his legions. The marquee, though large, was a plain one. It was lined with a sort of blue-striped cloth, and contained no other furniture besides a truckle-bed, a table, with two stools; and a solitary lamp, suspended from the cross pole, shed a not very brilliant light through it. The light was, however, strong enough to permit me to observe, that the individual before me possessed a handsome countenance and a commanding person. His age appeared to be about fifty, perhaps a year or two under; and his manners were at once courteous, gentlemanlike, and easy. There was no hauteur, nor the slightest affectation of hauteur about him; indeed, the readiness with which he invited me to sit down, and the familiarity with which he opened our conversation, struck me, as passing, rather than keeping too much within, the line of dignity. It was easy to perceive from his style of dress, that if he had lain down at all, it must have been in his clothes. But for the absence of his coat, for which a loose night-gown was

substituted, he appeared ready to mount his horse at a moment's notice; and a multitude of papers scattered upon his table, implied that his moments of solitude were not spent idly.

It is not worth while to lengthen out my story by detailing in full the particulars of the conversation which ensued. Enough is done when I inform you, that General Gates, though affecting all the while the most perfect indifference, did his best to draw from me a true account of the situation of the British army; and that I took good care to mix up just so much truth with falsehood, as at once to screen myself should the latter be detected, whilst by the former, I conveyed no information calculated to injure my friends. With respect to the causes which led to my desertion, I stated that they were chiefly of a private nature, wrongs having been put upon me by my superiors, such as I did not choose to brook; and I was particularly cautious not to drop a hint which might lead my interrogator to suppose that there existed in General Burgoyne's camp a spirit either of alarm or disaffection. Nay,

I went farther. I assured him with as great an air of candour as I found it possible to assume, that even now I was but a half convert from loyalty; and that though I had abandoned the King's standard, nothing should ever induce me to carry arms against my countrymen. In conclusion, I entreated his permission to retire to Philadelphia, where certain relatives by my mother's side were settled; and where I might follow the peaceable course of life which I had determined to adopt.

The General heard me out with great patience, and without the faintest apparent reduction of his good-humour. He expressed his surprise, indeed, that I should be ignorant of matters which he very soon convinced me were well known to himself; but he threw out no insinuation as if he distrusted, far less that he had penetrated my real designs. This was particularly the case on my denying all knowledge of an intended retreat during the night. "All my spies have assured me," said he, "that the British columns are in full march; and my very patrols assert, that they have heard the rolling of gun-carriages over the noise of the storm."

"It may be so," replied I, "but I deserted, as your Excellency already knows, from a distant outpost; and I assure you, that when I quitted it at least, nothing of the kind was spoken of there."

"Nay, and their boats and batteaux," continued he, without noticing my reply, "are all in motion. There has been a splashing of oars in the water since sunset: did you not say that your post lay upon the bank of the river?"

General Gates was perfectly right. Our boats had begun to move much earlier, and much more incautiously than they ought to have done, insomuch that the tumult occasioned by them, had been distinctly audible to our advanced sentries. I could not therefore deny the fact; but I endeavoured to convince him, that such was the discipline maintained in the British army, that neither inferior officers nor privates — that no persons indeed, except those directly attached to head-quarters, knew either of the designs of its chief, or the objects of any particular movements.

"Perhaps so," replied he; "yet other de-

serters have asserted, that the retrogression was openly spoken of in the lines, so early as noon."

"That," answered I confidently, "is altogether a mistake. I myself was accidentally an ear-witness to the proceedings of a council of war, which, no later than the night of the 7th, came to the determination that the army should hold its ground till supported."

"And from whence?" asked General Gates. I felt that I committed myself; but I at once said, "From the highlands, which, we are given to understand, are even now in the possession of a strong force from New York."

The General looked at me more keenly than he had yet done. "You overheard this decision?"

"I did."

"Then what might be the meaning of that abortive concentration in the redoubt on the right of your line, towards dusk?"

I explained that also to him.—"A funeral party!" exclaimed he: "Why did your General conceal the fact from me? Had I been aware of it, he would have met with no inter-

ruption from our artillery." I assured him that the fire had occasioned no loss; and he expressed himself pleased at the intelligence.

"Well, Sir," continued he, "as you are the bearer of no very important or authentic news, I cannot profess the same satisfaction at your arrival amongst us, which I should have done had the case been otherwise; but every convert from the principles of slavery to those of freedom, is welcome in the American camp. With respect to your intended removal to Philadelphia, that will be a matter for future consideration. You shall not be compelled to bear arms anywhere, least of all against those whom you designate your countrymen; it is not the custom in a free country to compel any man to serve against his inclination; but for the present, you must be content to remain quietly in camp. What you have heard respecting the advance of a force from New York is not without foundation. Such a force is at this moment in progress up the Hudson's; and should you fall into the hands of any stragglers belonging to it, your fate would be certain. But it comes too late to bring any benefit to Gene-

ral Burgoyne. Though you have not told me, I can tell you, that his case is hopeless. His troops are dispirited, his stores are exhausted, his sick and wounded will be abandoned before to-morrow. Next day I shall overtake him endeavouring to force his way across the river; and on the day following, he will be my prisoner.—And now you may retire."

General Gates made a signal to the sentry, who immediately led me back to the body-guard, by the commander of whom I was conducted to a tent already more than adequately filled by American dragoons. Here a blanket was spread for me upon the ground; and here I spent the remainder of the night, in a frame of mind such as you may imagine more easily than I could describe.

CHAPTER XIII.

I HAD slept but little, and as a necessary consequence felt but little refreshed, when a loud rolling of drums and braying of trumpets roused me. The Americans, it appeared, whatever their merits in other respects might be, were hearty admirers of such of the King of Prussia's standing rules as it lay within the compass of their imperfect discipline to obey, and beat their reveillies and tattoos just as regularly in camp before the enemy, as in garrison, when no enemy was within a hundred miles of them. The tumult of warlike instruments to which I now listened, gave, it appeared, the signal for their troops to stand to their arms; and it was obeyed, if neither silently nor very orderly,

still with promptitude, and much apparent willingness.

Like the rest of the army, the troopers among whom I had been lodged, sprang to their feet at the first summons. The horses, which had been picketed during the night under the slope of some broken ground, and had suffered considerably from exposure to the weather, were speedily rubbed down, saddled, and in order; whilst the men themselves, buckling on their accoutrements, took post beside them in readiness for service. Nothing, however, occurred for some time. It was still pitchy dark, and though the wind had fallen, the rain still came down in torrents, rendering every species of fire-arms in a great measure unserviceable. These causes necessarily operated against an advance; but I learned, that patrols were sent forward with a view of discovering whether or not Burgoyne had really quitted his position; and the boisterous exultation of those about me soon gave proof that the retreat of the British army had been ascertained.

In the mean while day gradually dawned, bringing before me, as the light increased, one of

the most remarkable spectacles which it has ever been my fortune to behold. The tents, marquees, and blanket-huts, which had abounded on my arrival, were all gone; they had been struck at the first beat of drum, and were now packed upon bat-horses and cars in rear of the lines. On the ground which they formerly covered stood numerous columns of infantry, supported here and there by a few squadrons of horse; guns and tumbrils, limbered up and in order, occupied the intervals, whilst groups of general and staff officers were riding backwards and forwards, for the purpose, as it seemed, of ascertaining that matters were in a proper train, or of rectifying such errors as might be detected. Of course, the appearance and bearing of the troops now around me presented a very remarkable contrast to those of the army which I had just quitted. Very few American corps seemed to be complete in any species of equipment; fewer still were clothed in a garb at all resembling a uniform. The Continentals, as their regular regiments were denominated, wore indeed blue coats, and their belts, pouches, and firelocks, seemed to be made

after the same fashion ; but the under portions of their dress varied in the most grotesque manner, whilst their hats seemed to have been gathered from a hundred different fields where a hundred different nations had fought. With respect to the Militia, again, nothing could exceed the clownish air that distinguished them. They were arrayed, some in the costume of their every-day occupations, some in hunting-dresses, some in a sort of patchwork uniform, partly English, partly French, whilst not a few would have been absolutely naked, but for blankets which they fastened about them, by thrusting their heads through a hole in the middle. In like manner, their arms and accoutrements bore little resemblance to those usually carried by soldiers. Long fowling-pieces and short rifles appeared in the same platoon, and even side by side. One man carried his ammunition in a leather bag slung at his back, another preferred a shot-belt, whilst a third was contented to make use of his pocket ; and as to bayonets, not one in a hundred possessed such a weapon, or bore a musket capable of receiving it. A very great number

were, however, armed with long knives, which hung in tight waist-belts; and several carried tomahawks, in the use of which I was given to understand that they were not less skilful than the Indians.

In spite, however, of the total absence of all pretensions to regularity, the American army was not to be despised; or treated, even in idea, as a mere mob. It is true that in the niceties of parade movements, very few, even of the Continental regiments, could boast of much proficiency; but they all, Militia as well as regulars, seemed capable of preserving a good line, and of marching in column with strict attention to distances. Moreover, it was easy to perceive, that they entertained the fullest confidence both in themselves and their leader. They conversed freely, it is true, in the ranks; the Militia, in particular, appeared to set all attempts to preserve quiet at defiance; but their conversation was bold, manly, and proud, implying not only a readiness, but an ardent desire to be led into action. Then as to numbers, I should conceive that this single

parade-ground contained a force of not less than ten or twelve thousand men; and I knew, from a variety of sources, that large detachments had been made, for the purpose of harassing and impeding the retreating army. Now the British General could not at this moment bring into the field more than three thousand five hundred men fit for duty: —what probability was there, in case General Gates should act with promptitude, that the former could escape destruction?

With this strong impression upon my mind; with the firm assurance that General Gates needed but to push forward in order to fulfil the threat which he had lately uttered; I experienced no slight relief when I was told that the American army could not for one day at all events, probably for a greater space of time, quit its ground. By some oversight or other, the proper authorities had forgotten to furnish the men with provisions; and their last morsel having been consumed before noon on the 8th, no movement could be made till a fresh supply should be issued out. The consequence was, that though of the

position which Burgoyne had abandoned, as well as of about three hundred sick and wounded men whom his necessities had compelled him to leave behind, General Gates took possession, and though he pushed light parties along the Dovacote road, by whom several guns, which had upset on the march, and a good deal of baggage, were captured, the mass of his army was paralyzed; and he saw himself in the unpleasant situation of a huntsman whose hounds drop the trail at the very moment when he considered himself secure of his prey.

To me, on the other hand, no contingency could have happened more cheering or consolatory. The intelligence communicated last night relative to the advance of a force from New York, was not forgotten:—could I but reach that force in time, Burgoyne might yet be saved. I knew that the attempt would be attended with imminent risks; should it fail, and I be recaptured, my fate was inevitable; yet the object in view was an important one, and I resolved to devote myself to its attainment. From that moment all my thoughts

were turned to the devising of some plan by which the vigilance of my guards might be eluded; and the following was the result of my cogitations.

Though exceedingly attentive in every other respect, the Americans, probably from the absence of power to act otherwise, had not furnished me with any change of habiliments since I arrived among them. My own, as I need scarcely say, were saturated with the rain; I had slept in them thus, and thus they continued to hang about me: it was not, therefore, a very gross demand upon their credulity to pretend that a severe illness was the consequence. I began to shiver, drew close to the fire, spoke abruptly, and exhibited other symptoms of indisposition, till at last the men, to whose charge I had been intrusted, became impressed with the idea which I wished them to receive. My case was immediately reported in the proper quarter, and an order arrived for my removal to the hospital. All this was exactly as I desired it to be. About ten o'clock in the day, I was placed with a detachment of sick in a

covered waggon; and before nightfall, found myself an inmate of a large mansion on the outskirts of the neat and flourishing town of Albany.

So far my project had been crowned with success. I was freed from the vigilance of men whom it was not easy to deceive, and advanced twenty miles upon the journey which it behoved me to accomplish; but the difficulties which still stood in my way, were of a nature not to be contemplated without the most serious apprehension. In the first place, I was a patient in a public hospital, every room and ward in which was crowded with sick and wounded, nurses, and medical attendants; whilst a military guard regularly kept watch over it, and sentinels patrolled backwards and forwards in front of either entrance. In the next place, I was at once ignorant of the route which it would be necessary to follow, and destitute of means of subsistence by the way; for the high road would, I apprehended, prove impassable, in consequence of the great traffic which at present prevailed; and to purchase provisions anywhere, would unavoidably expose me to

interruption. Nevertheless, the die was cast. I shut my eyes, as far as it was possible so to do, against the contemplation of danger; and turned my undivided attention to the discovery of some method of escape from Albany.

For the first day or two, every attempt to quit my ward was strictly prohibited. I was pronounced by the illiterate blockhead who attended me, to be labouring under a raging fever, and the slightest exposure to cold would, he declared, inevitably cause death. It was to no purpose that I professed myself convalescent; he knew the state of my body a great deal better than I, and he purged, bled, and otherwise tormented me, till I almost caught the disease which it had hitherto been my business to counterfeit. I need not pretend to describe what my feelings were under such circumstances. A thousand times I cursed my own short-sightedness, in having fallen upon a device, which, instead of advancing, threatened entirely to disconcert my project; and many and varied were the schemes which I pondered with a view of extricating myself from my present embarrassments. Of these, the first

and most obvious was, to leap the window by night, and to trust to chance, and the lightness of my own heels, for escape; but the window, on examination, proved to be closely fastened down, besides being secured on the outside by strong iron bars. Next, I thought of seizing the miscreant, and compelling him, by a threat of instant death, to guide me beyond the town; but that, too, would have been impossible, inasmuch as the room was occupied by at least a dozen persons in addition to myself. Finally, though quite alive to the disastrous consequences of delay, I learned to yield to circumstances over which I possessed no control; and during the whole of the 10th, 11th, and part of the 12th, I continued a close prisoner.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

ERRATA.

Page 15, line 13, *for* ' spoken,' *read* ' speaking.'
47, 7 from bottom, *for* ' half paved,' *read* ' half-formed.
110, 6 from bottom, after ' ventured ' *read* ' to advance.'
120, *for* ' one very,' *read* ' on every.'
238, *dele* ' themselves.'
294, 11, after ' I felt that I,' *insert* ' had.'

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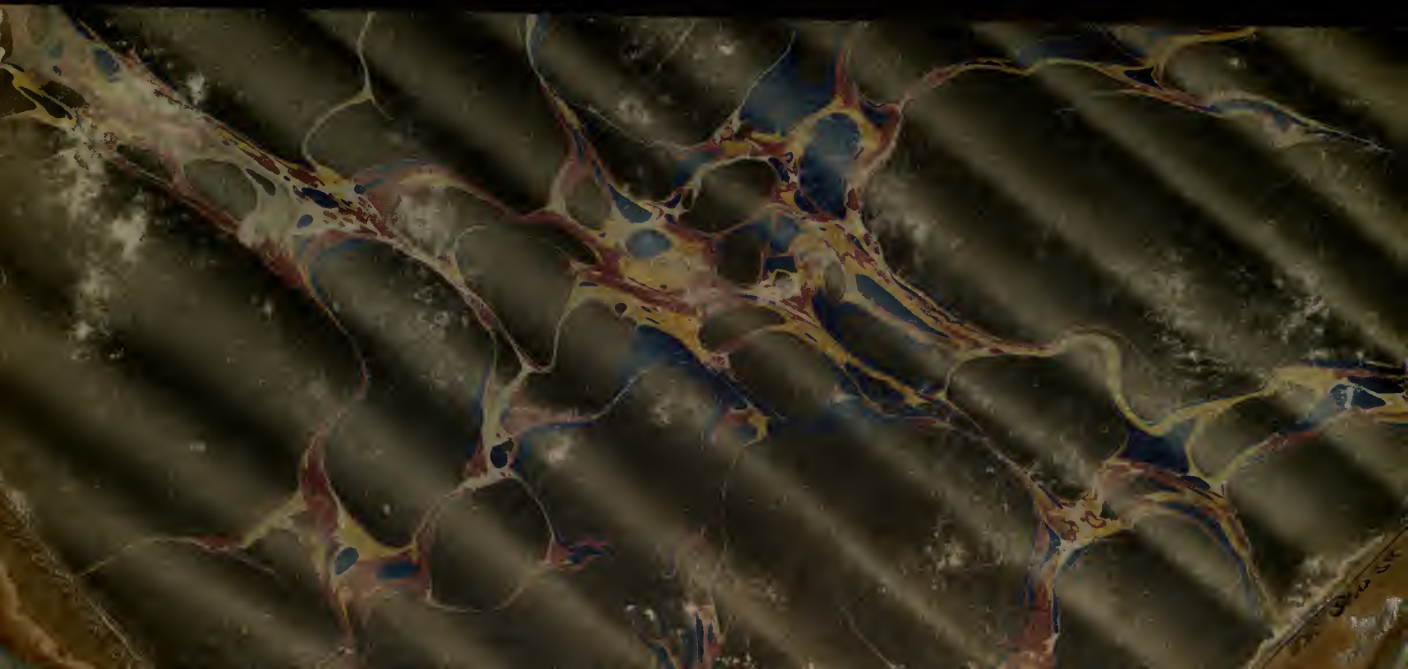
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